April 13, 1992

THE NEW YORKER

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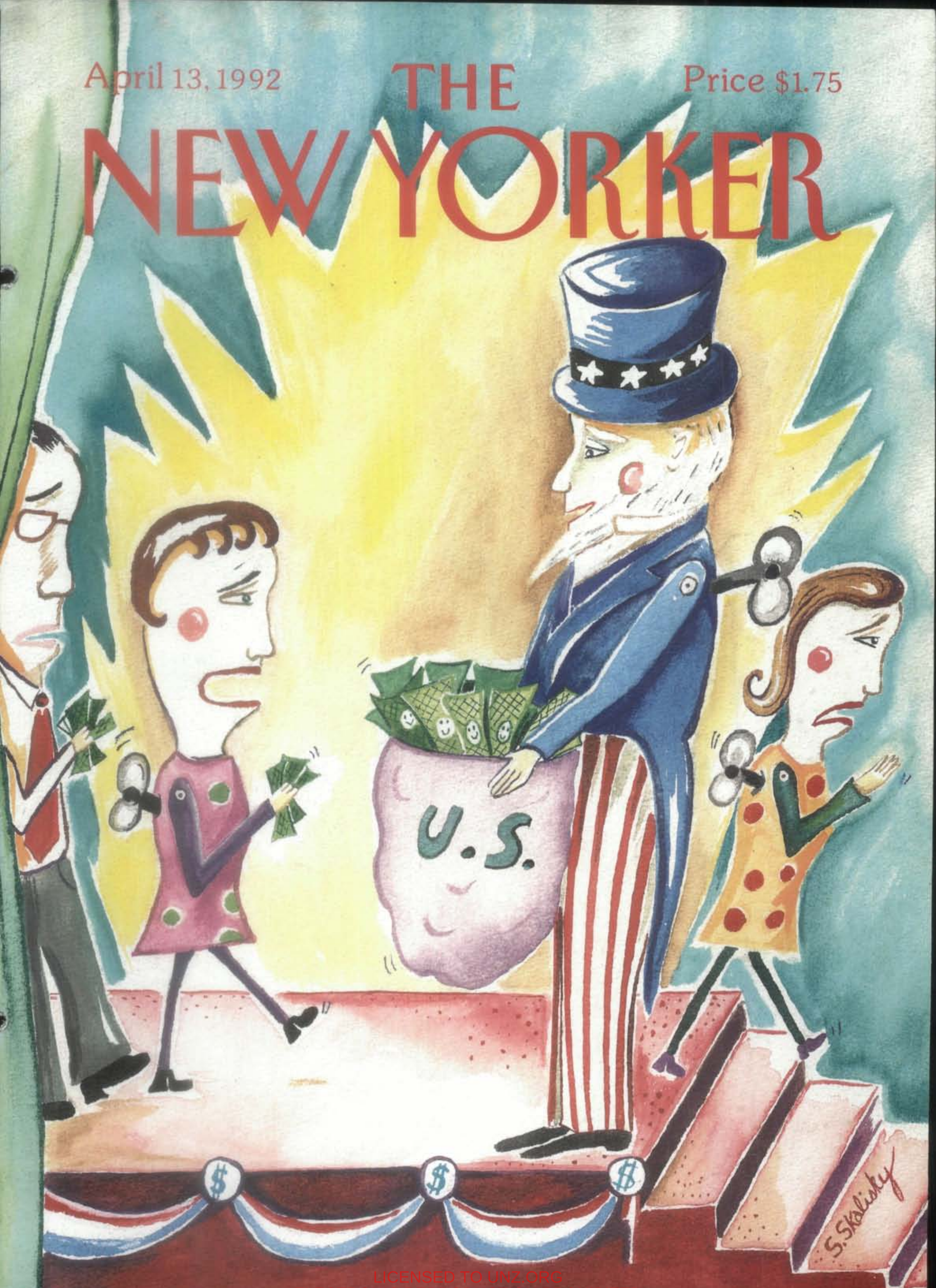
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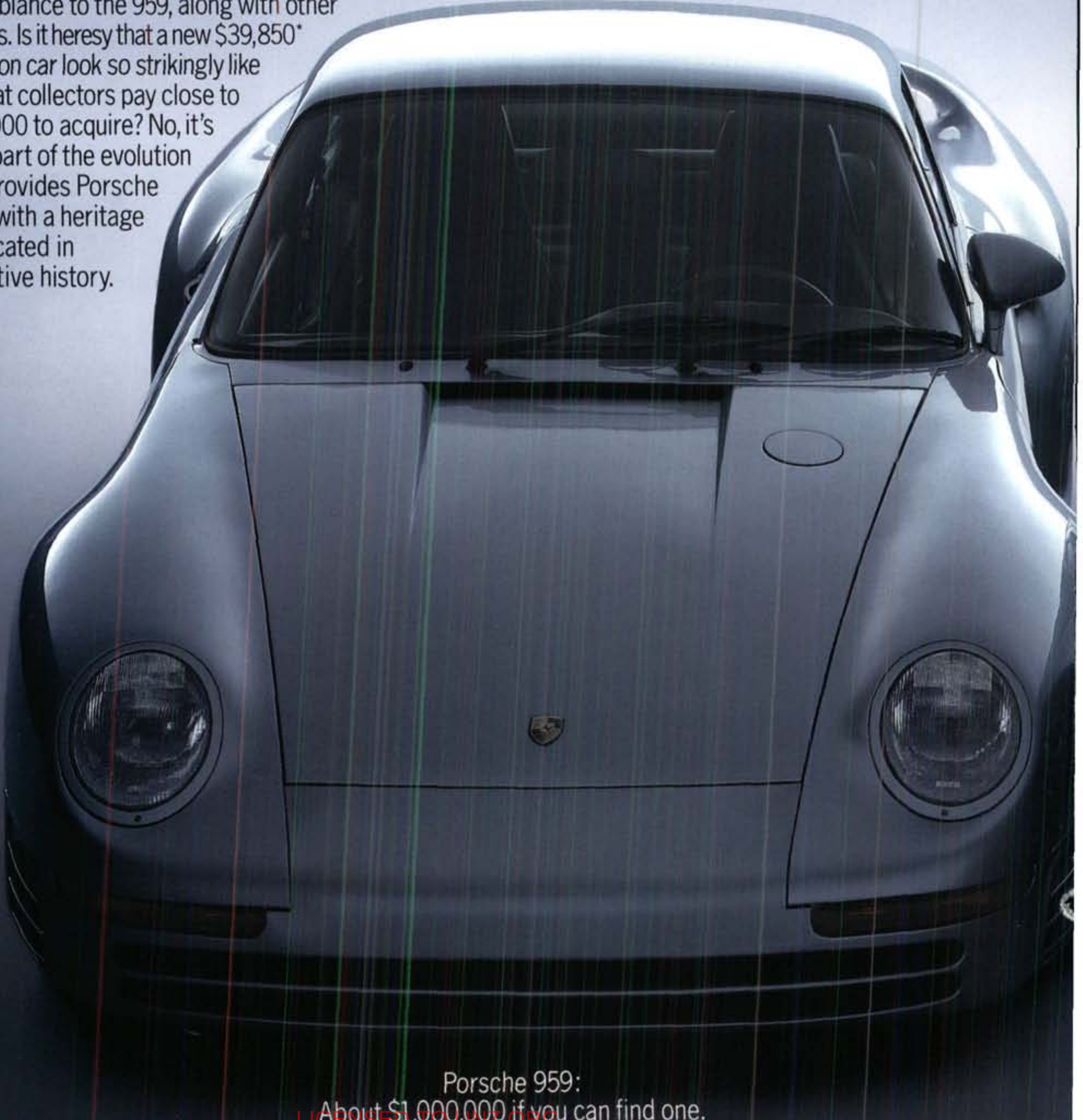

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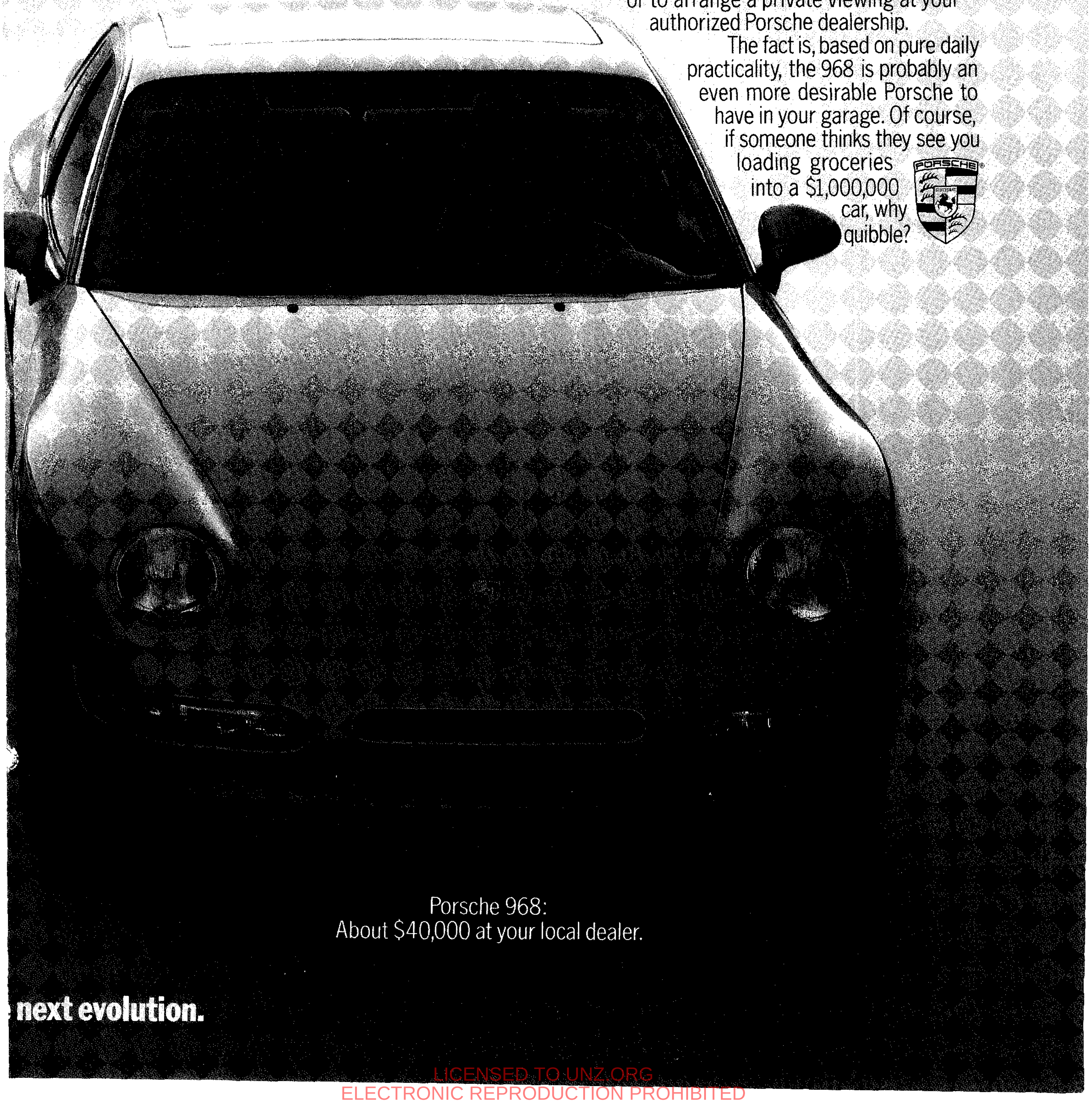

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THE NEW YORKER

TABLE OF CONTENTS

APRIL 13, 1992

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN 4

THE TALK OF THE TOWN 27

"MOUSETRAP" . . . . . *Jane Shapiro* 32

"A CADENZA" (POEM) . . . . . *Amy Clampitt* 34

"GIRL GAMES" . . . . . *Janet Kauffman* 37

"EMPTY ROOM" (POEM) . . . . . *David Woo* 38

ANNALS OF SCIENCE (A SILENT CHILDHOOD—PART I) . . . . . *Russ Rymer* 41

"THE SKELETON OF A TROUT IN SHALLOW WATER" (POEM) . . . *Nicholas Christopher* 54

THE THEATRE . . . . . *Edith Oliver, Mimi Kramer* 82

POPULAR MUSIC . . . . . *Elizabeth Wurtzel* 84

LETTER FROM JAPAN . . . . . *Patrick Smith* 89

BOOKS . . . . . *James Lardner* 100

COVER: *Stephanie Skalisky*

DRAWINGS: *Lee Lorenz, Edward Koren, Charles Barsotti, Robert Weber, Danny Shanahan, Roz Chast, Jack Ziegler, J. B. Handelsman, Donald Reilly, Mick Stevens, Michael Maslin, George Booth, Warren Miller, Richard Cline, Glen Baxter, Bernard Schoenbaum, Al Ross, Peter Steiner*

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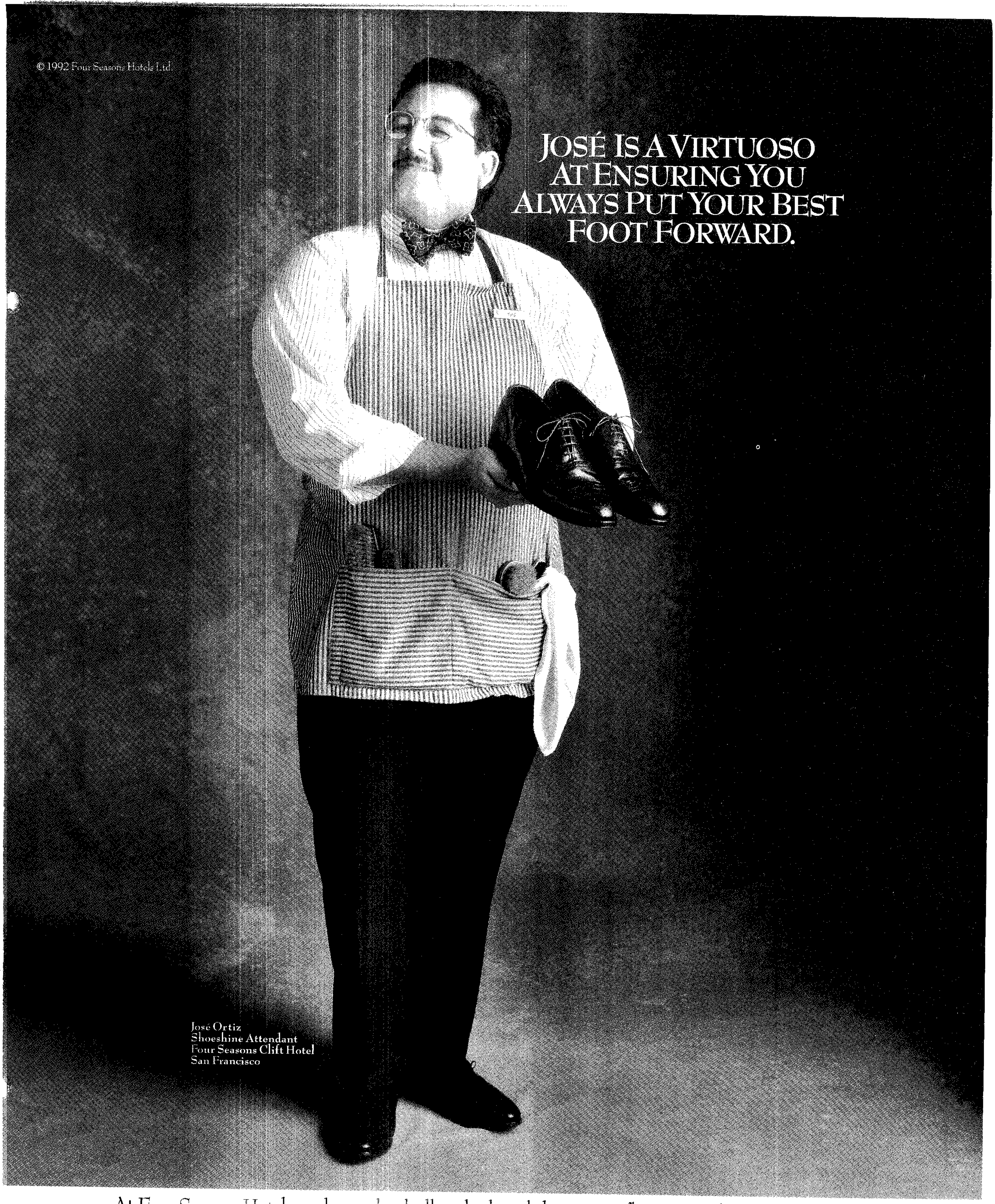

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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	6	7	8	9	10	11
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THE THEATRE

WHEN we met up with Rusty Magee, it was 10:45 P.M., and he was saying goodbye to Sidney Poitier. Mr. Poitier had come backstage after a performance of "Grandchild of Kings," the Harold Prince quasi-musical about the life of Sean O'Casey, at Theatre for the New City, in which, until recently, Mr. Magee sang and played the piano. Rusty had little chance to speak with his fellow-actor as he was due onstage at Catch A Rising Star, an Upper East Side comedy club, at eleven.

We accompanied Rusty as he made the harried flight up First Avenue in his white Toyota. "I don't normally talk on this trip," he said, turning the car into traffic. "My head's spinning. I'm onstage in eight minutes. I'm still humming Irish songs from the play. Traffic's piling up. I'm afraid there will be a backup at 57th Street."

Rusty used to dream of having both his careers take off. "My background is music, but I always wanted to mix comedy in. It was hell on my piano teacher—jokes all the time. My signature bit is 'Rasta Magee.'

"Here's the backup I was worried about," he said, swerving around a stalled taxi. "I've just got a few minutes now. In clubs, I'm a novelty act. A comedian stands alone behind a mike; I hide behind a keyboard. But I give people a break. Watching two hours of standup is like looking at the desert. It gets boring. Anyway, a piano doesn't make a joke *less* funny. I'm in two different worlds," he said, zipping through a yellow light. "At the play, we're brethren. Before the show, we sit at the piano and sing old Turtles songs. But comedy's like bullfighting: you've got to face the beast alone."

A station wagon moved left and a jeep moved right, clearing a path, into which Rusty accelerated. "If mixing drama and comedy has taught me anything, it's how to be a New York driver. I'm from Michigan, where everyone strolls down the highway. I don't have time for that." He looked at the clock on the dash, then said, "I now have three minutes until I've got to be funny."

Dodging a pedestrian, Rusty pulled up to the club, left his car double parked, and raced inside, where Rodney Dangerfield was on hand to test out new material. "It's strange to have Sidney and Rodney at either end of my ride," he said later. "Both typify the different fields I'm making my way in. Sidney is serious drama and Rodney is the workingman's comedian. Both are entertainers, but there's a lot of distance between them." On this night, at least, sixty-nine blocks of heavy traffic.

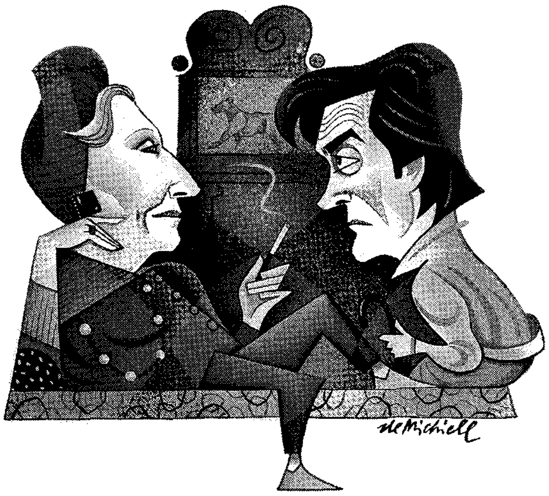
OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

THE BEST OF FORBIDDEN BROADWAY—A tenth-anniversary edition of Gerard Alessandrini's show, featuring both past highlights and new material. Opens April 6 at 7. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)

CANDIDE—An adaptation by Len Jenkin of the Voltaire classic. In previews. (CSC, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210.)

THE END OF THE DAY—A new play by Jon Robin Baitz, author of "The Substance of Fire." Mark Lamos directed. Opens April 7 at 8. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)



Nancy Marchand and Roger Rees in "The End of the Day"

FALSETTOS—A musical conceived by William Finn and James Lapine which combines their earlier works "March of the Falsettos" and "Falsettoland." With Michael Rupert, Stephen Bogardus, and Chip Zien. Previews begin April 8. (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

FIVE GUYS NAMED MOE—Six singers and dancers—Jerry Dixon, Doug Eskew, Milton Craig Nealy, Kevin Ramsey, Jeffrey D. Sams, and Glenn Turner—star in a celebration of the music of Louis Jordan. Written by Clarke Peters, this show originated in London, where it is still playing the West End. Preview on April 7. Opens April 8 at 7. (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

GUYS AND DOLLS—Jerry Zaks has directed this new production of the 1950 musical by Frank Loesser (score and lyrics) and Jo Swerling and Abe Burrows (book). (It was based on a Damon Runyon story.) Peter Gallagher, Nathan Lane, Josie de Guzman, and Faith Prince head a forty-member company. Previews through April 13. Opens April 14 at 6:30. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

THE HIGH ROLLERS SOCIAL AND PLEASURE CLUB—A musical featuring Allen Toussaint, set in a New Orleans sporting club. In previews. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

JELLY'S LAST JAM—Gregory Hines has the lead in a new musical about Jelly Roll Morton. George C. Wolfe directed and authored the book. In previews. (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

MAN OF LA MANCHA—A twenty-fifth-anniversary production of the musical, starring Raul Julia and Sheena Easton. In previews. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

METRO—A musical import from Warsaw, which features a cast of forty-one dancers and singers. Janusz Stoklosa composed the score. Mary Bracken Phillips has provided English-language lyrics and the book (in collaboration with Janusz Jozefowicz) for this production. In previews. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

ONE OF THE ALL-TIME GREATS—A black comedy by the actor Charles Grodin. In previews. (Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874.)

RUTHLESS!—A musical comedy about a child star, who is played by Tina Denmark. The book and lyrics are by Joel Paley and the music is by Marvin Laird. In previews. (Players, 115 Macdougal St. 254-5076.)

SHIMADA—The American première of a 1987 drama by the Australian playwright Jill Shearer. Ben Gazzara, Ellen Burstyn, Mako, and Estelle Parsons are among the cast members. In previews. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

A SMALL FAMILY BUSINESS—The American première of a play by Alan Ayckbourn. The cast includes Brian Murray, Caroline Lagerfelt, Jane Carr, and Anthony Heald. Lynne Meadow directed. In previews. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE—A revival of Tennessee Williams' classic 1947 play. Jessica Lange is Blanche, Alec Baldwin is Stanley, Amy Madigan is Stella, and Timothy Carhart is Mitch. Directed by Gregory Mosher. Previews through April 11. Opens April 12 at 6:30. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

TWO TRAINS RUNNING—August Wilson's new play, directed by Lloyd Richards. Larry Fishburne and Roscoe Lee Browne lead the cast. Previews through April 12. Opens April 13 at 6. (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

NEW THIS SEASON

BEAU JEST—A comedy by James Sherman. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

THE BELLS; OR, THE POLISH JEW—Everett Quinton has adapted an adaptation of a hundred-and-twenty-year-old "dramatic study." He also plays all the roles. Eureka directed. (Charles Ludlam, 1 Sheridan Sq. 691-2271.)

BERNIE'S BAR MITZVAH—Written and directed by Howard Perloff, this you-are-part-of-the-show show includes an array of food (complete with a Viennese table) in the ticket price. Ian Bonds plays Bernie. (24 Karat Club, 327 W. 44th St. For information about tickets, call 1-800 231-8607.)

CATSKILLS ON BROADWAY—A festival of ethnicity and all but unbroken laughter. Freddie Roman and Mal Z. Lawrence are the Jewish comedians; Dick Capri handles the Italians. The jokes explode around us, and there isn't a dud in the lot. Marilyn Michaels, the fourth member of the company, does imitations of imitations. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/23/91.) (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

CHEKHOV VERY FUNNY—The Pearl Theatre Company winds up its season with four short comedies by Chekhov. (125 W. 22nd St. 645-7708.)

CHESS—Tim Rice has revised the book and lyrics for this revival of the musical, which has a score by Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus. (Master, Riverside Dr. at 103rd St. 663-8893.)

CONVERSATIONS WITH MY FATHER—Judd Hirsch, David Margulies, and Tony Shalhoub in a play by Herb Gardner. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

CRAZY FOR YOU—Lightly based on "Girl Crazy," which opened in 1930, this glorious show is actually a celebration of the music of George Gershwin and the lyrics of his brother Ira—nineteen songs in all—and also of the witty, imaginative choreography of Susan Stroman. Ken Ludwig wrote the lively book. Harry Groener and Jodi Benson are the lead actor/dancers. The scenery is by Robin Wagner; the costumes are by William Ivey Long; and the masterly direction is by Mike Ockrent. Bless 'em all. (3/2/92) (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

DANCING AT LUGHNASA—How you respond to Brian Friel's wistful autobiographical play depends a good deal on your personality and preoccupations. Either you will find it lovely and lyrical or it will strike you as the memory play from Hell. (11/4/91) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

DEATH AND THE MAIDEN—Mike Nichols' Americanized version of Ariel Dorfman's play (in which Juliet Stevenson took London by storm last year) is a sad disappointment. The play, which is set in "a country that is probably Chile" and concerns a woman's attempt to punish the man she holds responsible for torturing her in captivity fifteen years before, is anything but subtle, and Glenn Close, Richard Dreyfuss, and Gene Hackman are all grossly miscast. (3/30/92) (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

Four Baboons Adoring the Sun—John Guare's play about a man and wife who invite the children of their former marriages to join them at an archeological dig in Sicily may have its flaws, but dullness is not one of them. Stockard Channing and James Naughton are fine in the leading roles (and so is everyone else aboard). Tony Walton's settings are truly marvellous, as lighted by Richard Pilbrow, and the action is lively, beginning to end. Peter Hall directed. (3/30/92) (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Closes April 19.)

From the Mississippi Delta—In eleven scenes, Endesha Ida Mae Holland dramatizes her own rise (and journey) from the Delta (where she had been a teen-age prostitute) to the University of Minnesota and triumph in academia. The leading character, though, is her mother, a midwife called Aint Baby, who is very well portrayed by Cheryl Lynn Bruce. The role of the author is split between Ms. Bruce, Sybil Walker, and Jacqueline Williams, and the result is a lively and merry evening. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330.)

Grandchild of Kings—Harold Prince's enthralling adaptation of the first two volumes of Sean O'Casey's memoirs is set—beautifully—by Eugene Lee in a square in Dublin. The performances, all of them satisfying, are by the members of the Irish Repertory Theatre Company; Padraic Moyles, Patrick Fitzgerald, and Chris O'Neill are Sean as child, young man, and old man, and the invaluable Pauline Flanagan is Sean's mother. Traditional Irish songs and dances accompany the action every inch of the way. (2/24/92) (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 477-7900.)

Hamlet—Stephen Lang has the title role and Elizabeth McGovern is Ophelia in this Roundabout Theatre Company production. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Criterion Center, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

Jake's Women—Alan Alda stars in a new play by Neil Simon, which Gene Saks directed. (4/6/92) (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

Julie Halston's Lifetime of Comedy—For up-to-the-minute coverage of what it is like to be "divorced, over thirty, hormonally imbalanced," you can't do better than the wit and wisdom of this multitalented actress-comedienne-sage. She's a little like Joan Rivers, a little like Joan Collins, and a little like St. Joan. Also a little like ZaSu Pitts. Among our favorite moments in this autobiographical show are the story of events leading up to Miss Halston's tragic divorce, the visit to the breast doctor, and the ritual reading and textual analysis of the *Times* wedding announcements. (Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226.)

The Lady from Havana—An encore presentation of a play by Luis Santeiro about a Cuban family in Miami. Three performances a week are in English; three are in Spanish. (INTAR, 420 W. 42nd St. 869-3530.)

Lotto (Experience the Dream)—Cliff Roquemore's comedy about a Los Angeles family who wins the lottery. (Heckscher, Fifth Ave. at 104th St. 369-6500.)

Lypsinka! A Day in the Life—A new show written and performed by John Epperson. Presented by New York Theatre Workshop. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 302-6989. Closes April 19.)

Marvin's Room—A play about dying, suffering, and sacrifice in one family, written in a style so frisky as to set the teeth permanently on edge. There is a fine performance by Mark Rosenthal as a smoldering young man. Also with Alice Drummond, Laura Esterman, and Tim Monsion. Scott McPherson is the dramatist, David Petrarca the director. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.)

The Master Builder—An aimless revival of Ibsen's noble play. (4/6/92) (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Closes April 26.)

The Most Happy Fella—This is one musical we think the world could be without and feel no sorrow. The story of a girl forced to content herself with some old duffer because some other old duffer wanted to teach everyone a lesson about making do with what life has to

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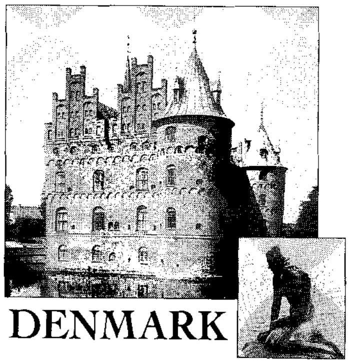

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offer, it's pseudo opera superimposed on pseudo Americana. As for Gerald Gutierrez's Goodspeed Opera production, it's your basic slightly-better-than-average dinner-theatre revival. What's the rumpus? (2/24/92) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The New Americans—A new work by Elizabeth Swados, presented by Theatre for a New Audience. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 279-4200. Closes April 11.)

Opal—A new musical by Robert Nassif Lindsey, presented by the Lamb's Theatre Company. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

The Oxcart—The Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary with a revival of Rene Marqués's drama, which was the company's first production, in 1967. Three performances a week are in English; four are in Spanish. (304 W. 47th St. 354-1293. Closes April 26.)

Red Diaper Baby—A one-man comedy written and performed by Josh Kornbluth and directed by Joshua Mostel. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103.)

Return to the Forbidden Planet—This light-minded entertainment is a patchwork of beloved pop songs stitched together with Shakespeareana. The show, however, has almost nothing to do with the cult movie it is based on, and still less to do with "The Tempest." Written and directed by Bob Carlton, it is more than anything else an occasion to laugh a bit and rock out a lot. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

Shmulnik's Waltz—Allan Knee's comedy, with music by David Shire. Seen earlier this season at the Jewish Rep. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 967-9077.)

Sight Unseen—Donald Margulies' engrossing new play, which is about an Eric Fischl-type painter who decides to look up an old girlfriend he once treated badly, takes the contemporary art scene to task. Technically, it also plays around with time a good deal, though never sloppily or gratuitously. You end up being affected by a curious kind of resonance—it's earned, not something you've brought with you into the theatre. (2/3/92) (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

The Substance of Fire—Jon Robin Baitz's play about an intransigent publisher at odds with his grown children, having moved from Playwrights Horizons, seems stronger than ever in this more formal theatre. The remarkable Ron Rifkin continues in the leading role, and he is ably supported by the members of the original company—Patrick Breen, Maria Tucci, Sarah Jessica Parker, and Jon Tenney. (3/9/92) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

'Tis Pity She's a Whore—Val Kilmer and Jeanne Tripplehorn in a production of John Ford's Jacobean tragedy, which JoAnne Akalaitis directed. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Closes April 19.)

Tubes—A performance work by Blue Man Group about art and other matters. (Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370.)

The Virgin Molly—A play by Quincy Long. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 645-8755. Closes April 12.)

York Theatre Company—Presenting a revival of **little me**, the 1962 musical comedy by Cy Coleman (score), Carolyn Leigh (lyrics), and Neil Simon (book). With Jo Ann Cunningham, Stephen Joseph, and others. (2 E. 90th St. 534-5366. Closes April 26.)

LONG RUNS

breaking legs: The Mafia meets Off Broadway. Philip Bosco and Vincent Gardenia play a pair of mobsters who back a new play in order to win a young dramatist for Gardenia's daughter. Tom Dulack wrote the comedy; John Tillinger directed it. With Larry Storch, Karen Valentine, Ronald Maccone, and Nick Wyman. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.). . . **cats:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.). . . **the fantasticks:** The longest-running long run turns thirty-two in May. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.). . . **forever plaid:** Stuart Ross's loving tongue-in-cheek salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties is a real treat. Bring your mom. Hell, bring the whole family. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.). . . **grand hotel:** The dazzling imagination of Tommy Tune's direction and choreography and the dazzling scenery by Tony Walton almost make up for the inner vacancy of this show, but not quite. The story and characters are skimpy and the music is undistinguished. Nevertheless, there isn't a boring moment. (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 586-6510.). . . **lips together, teeth apart:** Two couples share a beach house on Fire Island over the Fourth of July weekend, in Terrence McNally's very funny play about a number of serious matters. With Christine Baranski, Joanne Camp, Jonathan Hadary, and Brian Kerwin; directed by John Tillinger. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.). . . **lost in yonkers:** There's not one glimmer of honesty or authenticity in this family melodrama by Neil Simon. Set in Yonkers during the Second World War, it's about what happens when a cowering, pathetic man has to leave his two adolescent sons with his intimidating mother for the better part of a year. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.). . . **les misérables:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.). . . **miss saigon:** Oh, the horror! The horror! (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.). . . **nunsense:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.). . . **pageant:** A musical spoof of beauty contests. Book and lyrics by Bill Russell and Frank Kelly and music by Albert Evans. Conceived and directed by Robert Longbottom. (Blue Angel, 321 W. 44th St. 262-3333.). . . **perfect crime:** A murder mystery by Warren Manzi. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 695-3401.). . . **the phantom of the opera:** This much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets (by Maria Björnson), everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.). . . **the secret garden:** This lovely musical adaptation of the classic children's story by Frances Hodgson Burnett isn't just a kiddie show. Subtle, charming, intelligent, and wholly literary in its approach to adaptation, it manages both to be faithful to the spirit of the book and to comment on the particular moment in time that produced it. With Lydia Ooghe, Howard McGillin, and Alison Fraser. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.). . . **song of singapore:** A musical with a promising concept: turn a Polish veterans' hall into a Singapore night club, circa 1941, and spill murder and mayhem onto the premises. Unfortunately, the lavish settings (by John Lee Beatty) and the musical talent cannot conceal a very thin story and a host of excruciatingly bad jokes. (17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. 228-0844.). . . **the will rogers follies:** The sets by Tony Walton, the direction and choreography by Tommy Tune, the costumes by Willa Kim, and the row upon row of Ziegfeld girls make a feast for the eyes, but the funny bone and heart are neglected. Keith Carradine makes an engaging Rogers, but that is not enough, despite Cy Coleman's pleasant score. (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 730-8200.)

DANCE

Now that the Mark Morris Dance Group is back in New York, at the Manhattan Center, we have decided that the world can be divided into two sorts of people: those who would best appreciate Program A (April 7-11) and those who would best appreciate Program B (April 14 and April 16-18). Program A features live music by the Orchestra of St. Luke's, with soprano soloists Julianne Baird and Mary Westbrook-Geha. The scores are primarily classical, and include pieces by Haydn ("A Lake"), Henry Cowell ("Prelude and Prelude"), Alexander Tcherepnin ("10 Suggestions"), Lou Harrison ("Polka"), and Vivaldi ("Gloria"). There will also be a work called "Beautiful Day," set to an aria from a cantata that was once attributed to J. S. Bach (BWV 53). The majority of the dances are lyrical or formal in quality, and tend to be amusing or passionately aspiring—although we can't speak for "Polka" or "Beautiful Day," which are world premières. On this program, Mr. Morris will perform the solo suite "10 Suggestions," in which the way the dancer manipulates such common props as a hat and a hoop gives the audience a sense of tone and personality. Program B, in contrast, has no live music. "Behemoth," a New York première, is performed in silence, and the other pieces are set to recorded country-and-Western or rock-and-roll songs, by the Louvin Brothers ("Songs That Tell a Story"), the Violent Femmes ("Lovey"), and Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys ("Going Away Party"). Most of the work is narrative in character, and ranges from wry to dour. The choreographer will perform in "Songs That Tell a Story" and "Going Away Party."

Regardless of which program you end up at, if you come a bit early you'll avoid the crush that can develop at the last minute—because you have to take one of only two elevators to reach the theatre. As an incentive to arrive early, Mr. Morris has scheduled some free pre-theatre entertainment: a virtuoso washtub-bass player named Jay Bailey, whom Mr. Morris discovered performing in the subway. At Mr. Morris's invitation, Mr. Bailey selected his own audition spot—the Prince Street stop, uptown side, of the R line, a station with particularly graceful acoustics. Doors will open at 7 P.M., with curtain time for the Morris company at 8.

Mark Morris Dance Group—A two-week engagement that will run through April 18. April 7-11 at 8: "Beautiful Day" (première), "A Lake" (New York première), "Prelude and Prelude," "10 Suggestions," "Polka" (première), and "Gloria.". . . ¶ April 14 at 8: "Songs That Tell a Story," "Lovey," and the New York premières of "Behemoth" and "Going Away Party." (Manhattan Center Grand Ballroom, 311 W. 34th St. For tickets, call 307-4100.)

Lar Lubovitch Dance Company—Presenting a program that consists of "Symphonia Concertante" and the New York premières of "Waiting for the Sunrise" and "American Gesture." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907. April 7 at 7:30, April 8-10 at 8, April 11 at 3 and 8, and April 12 at 3.)

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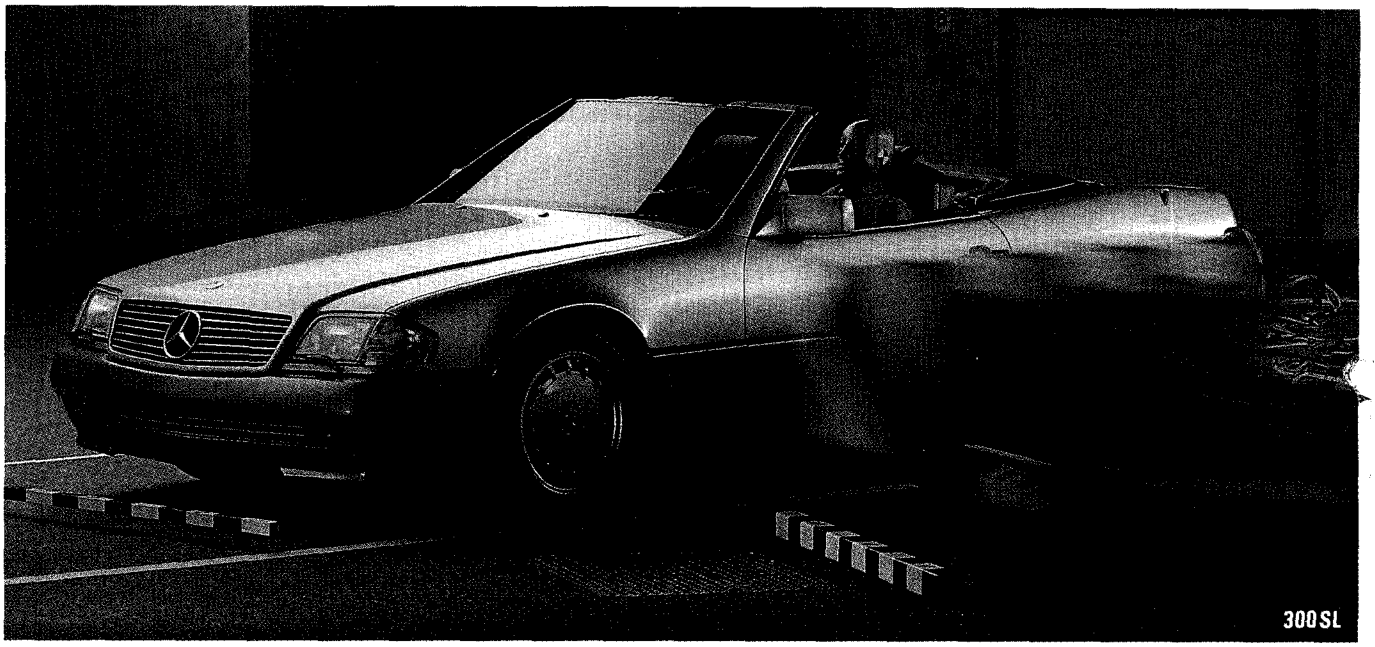

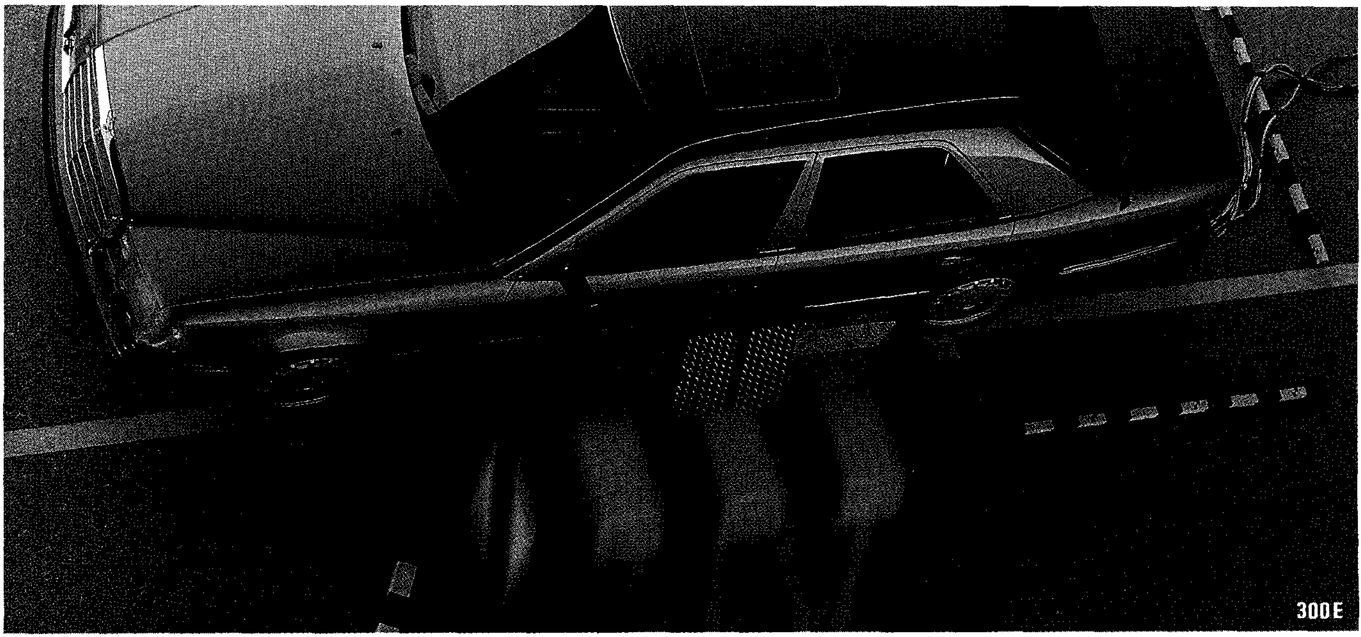

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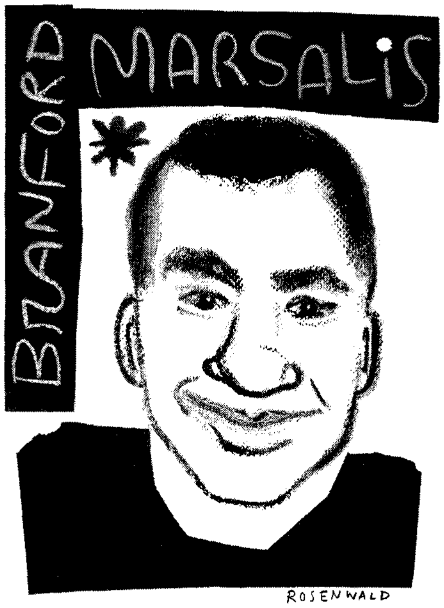


Branford Marsalis at the Village Vanguard

NIGHT LIFE

A COUPLE of years ago, during the fledgling days of this column, we reported on the Irish-born singer Luka Bloom and the terrifically vivid solo shows he was playing around town. Shortly thereafter, Bloom made himself scarce. He returned to Ireland to live and to record "Acoustic Motorbike," a lovely if subdued followup to his spirited début, "Riverside." The change of scenery seems to have served him well. When Bloom comes to town, on April 14, he'll be performing at Symphony Space, which is far, far bigger than the cramped and sweaty bars he frequented during his cult-hero days.

Earlier this year, we got a lucky break and saw Bloom play an unannounced late-night gig at Café Sin-é, in the East Village. He performed simply because he had a night free. He was in town to promote his new record and to film a video for "I Need Love," an L.L. Cool J cover he's been playing for years. We're ambivalent about the folkified rap song. When we first heard Bloom perform it, it seemed light and campy, a wink at the sort of musical cross-fertilization that's become so common so quickly. Now, however, Bloom seems to take "I Need Love" too seriously—his renditions have become a tad earnest, and even his own songs have started to rely rather heavily on rap-like patter. Frankly, we prefer "Sunny Sailor Boy," a gorgeous new Mike Scott tune that Bloom is now working into his act. (Scott is a friend of Bloom's, as well as the leader of that first-rate Irish outfit known as the Waterboys.) At Café Sin-é, Bloom turned Scott's song into a memorable encore. Then, just as he finished it, there was a commotion by the door, and something a bit magical happened. "Mike Scott himself has just stumbled in," Bloom explained, laughing. "I'm afraid you're gonna have to hear his song again."

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**MARY CLEERE HARAN** is in the midst of a month-long engagement in the woody nook known as the Oak Room. Haran will be presenting a new program, one that includes a segment devoted to songs by Jimmy Van Heusen and Johnny Burke. Shows at nine-thirty Tuesdays through Thursdays, and at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays.

Arthur's Tavern, 57 Grove St. (675-6879)—A quirky, endearing Village watering hole, perpetually decorated for the holidays—all of them. The musicians work in the back of the room, in a well ringed by a bar—a setup that seems to bring out the latent show-biz tendencies in some of the bar's patrons. Mondays belong to the Grove Street Stompers, Tuesdays through Thursdays to Al Bundy, Fridays and Saturdays to Mabel Godwin, and Sundays to Lee Lorenz and the Creole Cookin' Jazz Band. Music from nine-thirty.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A tony cabaret attained by passing through an opulent tapas restaurant, where wicker baskets overflow with fruit and vegetables, and where hams hang over the bar; if you haven't had dinner, you may never make it to the show. **KAREN AKERS** is here as of April 7. Twenty-four-year-old French singer **PATRICIA KAAS,** who'll be here April 12-13 (and at Town Hall on April 14), was discovered by Gérard Depardieu. She has already sold a couple of million records in her motherland, collected many of its top recording honors, and, not surprisingly, been compared to Edith Piaf. Kaas has a nice, smoky voice, but, for Stateside listeners, her album, titled "Scène de Vie," may seem a little thin at times. It's full of synthesizer pop and self-consciously cool jazz—the kind in which all the band members snap their fingers. Shows Tuesdays through Thursdays at nine, Fridays and Saturdays at nine and eleven-fifteen.

Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—This northern restaurant-bar, an airy, two-tiered space with pastel walls and potted greenery, is a shade too slick for Columbia students but just right for post-collegiate jazz fans. The name is taken from the long-gone pleasure dome that featured Bird himself. Music from nine. Dining.

Bitter End, 149 Bleecker St. (673-7030)—For the price of a drink or two, you can catch a handful of bands here any night of the week. (The cover charge is mostly a formality—walk along Bleecker Street and you're sure to have a free pass handed to you.) In the old days, as a mural behind the bar attests, the club hosted the likes of Bob Dylan, Linda Ronstadt, and Joni Mitchell. Now you're not likely to recognize anyone onstage unless you went to high school with them. Music from eight-thirty Sundays through Thursdays, and from nine on Fridays and Saturdays.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Jazz, mirrors, a gift shop, and, of course, those incredible, shrinking aisles that turn a mid-set dash to the restroom into something of a steeplechase. **JOE WILLIAMS,** a refined bass-baritone who sang with Count Basie in the fifties, holds sway April 7-12; the **FRANK WESS** big band shares the bill. A trio headed by guitarist **JOHN MC LAUGHLIN** gets started on April 14. First set at nine. Dining.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A big, pleasant room where they pack them in until someone says uncle. The walls and columns are basic black with some rainbow detailing here and there—the place looks a little like the outside of a van. If you end up without a seat, you can stand at the bar—finally a club where they don't force you to drink—and mull over photographs from great shows you've missed. **MOSE ALLISON** and the **HOLLY COLE** trio are here on April 7; **THE BOBS** appear on April 9 (at seven-thirty and ten-thirty); **STEVE FORBERT** arrives on April 10; and **BUSTER POINDEXTER** leads his band on April 11. **OFRA HAZA,** performing here April 12-13, is a vocalist who combines Middle Eastern scales with Western synth-pop grooves. The earnest, Marlboro-voiced **EDDIE MONEY,** who has written some anthem-like pop-rock hooks in his day, plays an acoustic set on April 14. Shows usually start at eight and eleven. Burgers, fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster.

Café Sin-é, 122 St. Marks Pl (982-0370)—An unpretentious storefront café devoted to such things as Irish stew and the *Irish Times.* There's no stage per se, but bohemian musicians gather around a piano and work up some nice, wistful sets while bohemian patrons sit writing in journals, rolling cigarettes, or lingering over one of the two varieties of beer sold here: Budweiser and Rolling Rock. Sin-é means "that's it" in Gaelic and is *not* Sinéad O'Connor's nickname. The café is a nice place to while away an hour, and you never know who'll turn up and tune up. Music generally begins at about eight-thirty.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The pastel uptown spa known as the Café Carlyle is home to actress-singer **DIXIE CARTER.** Carter, who's best known for playing an interior decorator on the TV series "Designing Women," is singing serious and silly numbers by Porter, Berlin, and John Wallowitch, among others. Tuesdays through Saturdays at eight-forty-five and ten-forty-five. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** presides at the piano. Carroll's sets, which are usually equal parts jazz and cabaret, include songs by Gershwin, Porter, Arlen, Dizzy Gillespie, and Billy Strayhorn, along with some of her own. Her vocals can be on the thin side, but her piano playing is always breezy and cool. Music from nine-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays.

Chicago B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (255-7373)—A club that features "only Chicago-area blues artists working with their regular Chicago blues bands." This concept may not appeal to New York blues artists, but it could save local blues aficionados a trip to the Midwest. Singer-guitarist **OTIS RUSH,** one of Chicago's most gifted bluesmen, can be found here April 10-11. Music from nine Tuesdays through Thursdays, and from nine-thirty Fridays and Saturdays. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

Dan Lynch, 221 Second Ave., at 14th St. (677-0911)—Outside Dan Lynch, you'll come across a lot of suspicious characters who'll claim to know you; inside you'll find a pupil-dilating, brown-on-brown bar. The place brightens up considerably at ten, with a variety of live blues, including vamps of the "put on your red dress" variety.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—The seating arrangements in this long, narrow, red-velvet-and-mirror-walled basement make flying coach seem roomy; nevertheless, it's one of the city's top jazz spots—thanks largely to the club's talent bookers. But watch your head. The **MICHAEL MORIARTY** quintet will be here through April 12. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL** leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

Jewel Box Lounge, 323 W. 44th St. (262-3333)—An intimate, glittery cabaret whose name describes it perfectly. The crown jewel here just now is **BUD E. LUV,** a Vegas-style crooner with some big rings of his own, as well as a pompadour and a winning collection of smoking jackets. Mr. Luv takes his name from a character in Jerry Lewis's "The Nutty Professor," though the latter-day Luv is in a more lighthearted vein than the Lewis character, which was a caustic sendup of Dean Martin. This Mr. Luv has dead aim, and he pulls off a feat: he wrings laughs from a concept you may have thought was exhausted. Shows Tuesdays through Fridays at ten, Saturdays at nine and midnight, and Sundays at nine.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Brass rails, vintage posters, Hirschfeld drawings, a menu full of items like bangers and mash, and a piano. Knickerbocker is an airy, good-spirited place and, while music often takes a back seat to conversation, some able piano-and-bass teams turn up regularly. **RONNY WHYTE** and **FRANK TATE** are here April 7-11; guitarist **GENE BERTONCINI** and pianist **VLADIMIR SHAFRANOV** start up on April 15. Music from nine-forty-five.

Lone Star Roadhouse, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—It's named for its Texas décor, but perhaps a more apt name would be the Second Chance, since so many lost, forgotten, or faded rockers turn up here. But the club's busy schedule includes a variety of newer acts, too. **TOMMY CHONG,** of Cheech & Chong fame, will perform on April 10. The Texas-blues guitarist **ALBERT COLLINS,** who will be here on April 11 with guest John Campbell, found his trademark "cool" sound in the fifties and has held on to it ever since. His early records are mostly instrumental, carried forcefully along by the searing, jagged sound of his guitar. Later, he began developing his singing talents. In the late seventies, he joined up with Alligator Records, where "cool" continues to be the operative word, to judge by his record titles—for example, "Frozen Alive," "Ice Pickin'," and "Cold Snap." Music after nine. Dining.

Manny's Car Wash, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—This blues bar stands apart from the Upper East Side's usual array of singles bars, and has become a big draw for the neighborhood's army of post-collegiates. The neon beer signs, Manny's caps, and funky drink concoctions lend a frat-house aura, but don't let that put you off: this long, dark, brick-walled room is a good spot to catch blues artists both major and minor. **WALTER (WOLFMAN) WASHINGTON** holds forth April 8-9, followed by **BLUE IN THE FACE** April 10-11. Sets from nine-fifteen, except Sundays, when they begin at eight-forty-five.

Marquee, 547 W. 21st St. (929-3257)—If the hero of a movie walked down this creepy, semi-deserted block, the audience would be throwing things at the screen and shouting "Turn back! Turn back!" Thanks to this fine alternative-music club, though, there's usually a fairly steady flow of traffic through these parts. This week, intrepid young New Yorkers will be coming to see **JOHN ZORN'S NAKED CITY** (April 9) and **SUPERCHUNK, SCRAWL,** and Unrest (April 10).

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—A plain blue back room whose far wall is decorated with round things: a Frisbee, some singles, a drum head, and the woofer from a speaker cabinet, to name a few. The beer of choice here is Rolling Rock—by a landslide—and the crowd may make you feel as if you have a midterm to study for, but many of the bands that play here today will be playing somewhere more expensive tomorrow. The iconoclastic hardcore outfit **FUGAZI** comes in on April 7, and **HAYDEN THOMPSON** is here on April 10. On April 11, the **TELEVISION PERSONALITIES** perform. The London-based group, led by singer-songwriter Dan Treacy, has been around since the late seventies, but, either for financial reasons or because of inertia, has never played in the U.S. before. Treacy sets incisive pop-culture satire to breezy, bubble-gum melodies, and his topics have ranged from punk poseurs to David Hockney. In Europe, the TVP's are cult heroes; in the U.S., they're the cult hero's cult heroes. Also playing is the **MAD SCENE,** a New York-based pop group, who convinced the TVP's to hop the pond. Shows at ten on Thursdays, and at eleven on Fridays and Saturdays.

TOPPER

Maybe it's that ubiquitous "X," emblazoned on a multitude of ski and baseball caps, that has done it. Whatever the cause, lately we've had hats on the brain. So, too, has the Millinery Information Bureau, which, aided by a mayoral proclamation, has declared April 2-9 Straw Hat Week in New York. According to Casey Bush, executive director of the bureau, there has been a reversal of the sartorial trend toward hatlessness ("When Jackie O. got into her bouffant hairdo, that killed the whole thing"), and that's cause for celebration. Employing imagery that might have delighted Salvador Dali, she explained, "I couldn't stand the idea of hats going down the drain."

In deference to tradition, it should be pointed out that in some circles, May 15 has come to be known as Straw Hat Day, when all dapper men-about-town are expected to shelve their winter fedoras in favor of their lighter panamas and skimmers. This year, though, with the action expanded to a full week and pushed forward to before Easter, retailers appear to be focussing on women who haven't yet purchased their bonnets: Macy's, where the mayoral decree was read last week, has trunk shows and informal modelling on the Main Floor, and Lord & Taylor is conducting a "Design Your Own Hat" event on April 8 with the services of an expert milliner. L. & T.'s windows are also showcasing (April 6-15) the pipe-cleaner-and-flower creations of a "Fantasy Hat Competition" held among students at Parsons and the Fashion Institute of Technology. Hats off!

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—Not to be confused with its richer cousin, the Rainbow Room, which is just down the hall. There, you'll find expansive Art Deco glitter; here, intimate nineties glitter. The performers, with their backs to the window, have to compete with a view of the Hudson, the George Washington Bridge, and beyond. Rainbow & Stars is currently home to a long-running show bearing the unfortunate title "'S Wonderful, 'S Marvelous, 'S Gershwin!" The roster of performers: **JUDY BLAZER, STAN FREEMAN, PETER REARDON, FRED WELLS, CAROL WOODS,** and **JO ANNE WORLEY.** On Sundays (at seven and nine-thirty), **JONATHAN SCHWARTZ** sings and tells tales of the music world. Shows other nights from nine. Dining. Closed Mondays.

Red Blazer Too, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—A place where a fella and a gal can put on the feedbag, get a little tight, and cut a rug. Mondays belong to the Smith Street Jazz Society, Tuesdays and Fridays to **VINCE GIORDANO AND THE NIGHTHAWKS,** Thursdays to Stan Rubin's big band, and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and His Stompers. Show times vary.

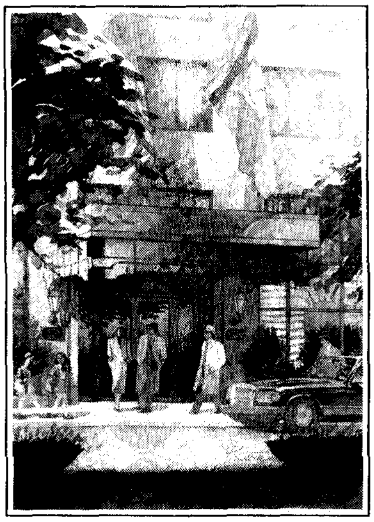
Russian Tea Room, 150 W. 57th St. (265-0947)—Known for, among countless other things, a scene in "Manhattan" in which Woody Allen tries to teach his young son how to score. Upstairs, there's a small, red-gold-and-green cabaret. **JERRY STERNBACH** and **K. T. SULLIVAN** appear on April 13. Shows at eight and ten-thirty. Dining and, of course, drinking.

Space at Chase, 98 Third Ave., at 12th St. (475-1407)—An East Village joint where, for a few bucks, you can hear a handful of local rock bands. Some of the bands will make you want to cower under the pinball machine while others will make you want to dance and shout and start your own independent label. As for décor, there's a bar, some chairs, some tables, some walls, a ceiling, and two dart boards. Music from nine-thirty, except on Tuesdays, when it starts at seven.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—An itinerary stop for the international jazz groupies who, on any given night, can be seen roaming the streets of the Village. Up front, there's a glass-enclosed sidewalk café; in back is a larger room, with a pressed-tin ceiling, red brick, and more pinewood than a ski lodge. **JOE BECK** and **RED MITCHELL** are in residence April 7-12; **NAT ADDERLEY** brings in his quintet on April 14. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter **MILES EVANS** is in action on Mondays. Tee-off time is ten. Dining.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The late Max Gordon, who opened this holiest of jazz shrines in 1935, once described the club's early patrons as a mix of "poets, W.P.A. writers, hustlers, broads on the make, and moochers." The **KENNY KIRKLAND** quintet is in for one night only on April 7. The **BRANFORD MARSALIS** trio performs April 8-12, and **BUTCH MORRIS** leads an eleven-piece ensemble as of April 14. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays. Music after nine-thirty.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—One of those snazzy, awninged eateries you've seen nestled amid brownstones in the Village and always wondered about. The food is Italian, the atmosphere is pastels and soft lights, and the musicians, who set up in a room between the bar and the dining room, are first-rate. Pianist **KIRK LIGHTSEY** and bassist **CECIL MC BEE** work out together through April 11. Pianist **ROGER KELLAWAY** and bassist **JAY LEONHART** begin a run on April 13. Music from eight.



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EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

WHOEVER said "Dying is easy, comedy is hard" must have done so right after his five minutes of standup at Amateur Night at the Improv (358 West 44th Street). The arctic wind of spring outside the club was an easier element to face than the chilling stillness of a failed punch line. Eleven fledgling comedians, who file with the I.R.S. as lawyers, teachers, and waiters, each took the stage in the hope of turning their allotted three hundred seconds into one long knee slap. Ten of the eleven realized how long it can take for those seconds to add up.

Unlike the amateur-watchers at the Apollo, however, who thirst for flop sweat the way Julie Wilson covets gardenias, the Improv audience is kind. Though each comic faces friends and strangers alike, those strangers are the friends and loved ones of other brave comic souls, so the emotional stakes involved keep derision to a minimum. Only a young man who made fun of Paul Tsongas's triumph over cancer actually got booed.

Nevertheless, considering some of the material, it might have been cruel to be kind. Take-my-wife jokes, "my sex life is so bad that..." jokes, undersized-primary-sex-characteristic jokes, oversized-waist-and-thigh jokes, the-blighter-side-of-dating jokes, self-denigrating jokes (the worst kind), and lines-that-no-one-could-ever-have-construed-as-a-joke jokes—it was as if these eleven eager young people had gone to the Museum of Television and Radio and studied old Ed Sullivan kinescopes. "Sort of makes you appreciate Andrew Dice Clay a little more," mumbled a gentleman at the next table. Only one of the comics, a young man who went by the name Walking Love, told stories that were personal, found humor in the topical, admitted he'd read a paper. His mini-routine about the glut of unnecessary journalism ("Warren Beatty is going to be a father. Who cares? Warren Beatty is getting married. Who cares? Warren Beatty's birthday is the same day as the Oscar telecast. Who the hell cares?") got the only ovation of the night. "God, I want to do it again," he gushed when he got off. "And it all happened so fast, didn't it?" he asked one of the women who had preceded him. She didn't answer, lost in thought about how second No. 187 had gone wrong.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

RINGLING BROTHERS AND BARNUM & BAILEY CIRCUS—The hundred-and-twenty-second version of The Greatest Show on Earth. (Madison Square Garden. Performances run through May 3. For information about show times and tickets, call 465-6000.)

THE EASTER SHOW—One of Radio City Music Hall's annual extravaganzas. With the Rockettes. (Sixth Ave. at 50th St. April 10-23. For information about show times and tickets, call 247-4777.)

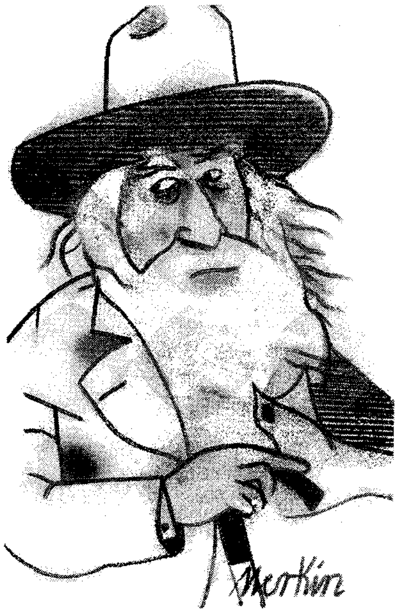
TOM RUBNITZ—A retrospective of the artist's video work. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. April 12 at 8.)

LAURIE ANDERSON AND ERIC BOGOSIAN—In a benefit performance. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. April 15 at 7:30.)

ART

IN an entertaining and clear-minded essay about his friend Elaine Reichek, the artist Jimmie Durham writes that "she has 'mastered' knitting the way painters are supposed to 'master' painting." He's right. In her current show (Grey Art Gallery, New York University, 33 Washington Place; through May 16), Reichek's renderings in wool of Native American tepees are demonstrations of virtuoso technique. They are also intellectually brilliant. Closely based on images in archival photographs, which, scaled up and variously altered, accompany them, the knitted tepees hang on pegs in all their verisimilitude of pattern and detail, though in collapsed, sacklike form. Reichek, of course, is engaged by the unreality of the pictures rather than by any realistic notion about life on the open plains. Whatever else they may be, these pieces are also architectonic deconstructions, wreaking havoc on our ethnographic habits and on our history of trust in images that have been mechanically or "scientifically" produced. And remember, we're talking about knitting: a subversion and celebration of the "womanly" arts. Durham writes about a "vicious innocence" in Reichek's work, and this, too, seems just right.

The knitted tepees are among the earliest works on view in this exhibition, aptly titled "Native Intelligence." Reichek's more recent pieces include an irresistible group of embroidery samplers in which the artist once again impeccably demonstrates traditional technique while sharply addressing big cultural issues. The "Home Sweet Home" sampler, for example, features—yes—a tepee, and a lovely neoclassical mourning sampler includes a tomb with the stitched epitaph "Bury my heart at Wounded Knee." There are many other wonderful things in this well-installed show, ranging from photocollages to sewing-kit assemblages to a great Will Rogers quote embroidered on a fabric with a popular Wild West motif: "My forefathers did not come over on the Mayflower. But they met the boat."



Walt Whitman, celebrated at the Museum of the City of New York and at the New York Public Library

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—A retrospective of black-and-white and color photographs by Helen Levitt. Through June 28.... ¶ Barbizon, in the Forest of Fontainebleau, was a meeting place and inspiration for several French landscape painters in the eighteen-fifties and sixties. A large sampling of works by these artists—Théodore Rousseau, Jean-François Millet, Jean-Baptiste Camille Corot, and others—is on view. Through May 10.... ¶ Fifty works by William Harnett (1848-92), the Irish-American painter who was the father of the trompe-l'oeil school. Through June 14.... ¶ The recent donation of the Perls collection—a hundred and sixty-three objects from the kingdom of Benin—has substantially redefined the museum's African holdings. This exhibition of the collection is a welcome relief from the rigid theatre of many of the museum's blockbusters: it enables viewers to make their own discoveries.... ¶ "American Rococo, 1750-75." Furniture, silver, paintings, engravings, ceramics, and glass made in pre-Revolutionary America. Through May 17.... ¶ "The Lotus Transcendent." The Eilenberg collection, from which this show has been selected, is not particularly comprehensive nor focussed on grand masterpieces, but it does sparkle in many unexpected ways. For instance, it includes a group of bronze sculptures from Indonesia that many consider to be the finest privately assembled collection of such material in the world. Through June 28. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Allegories of Modernism: Contemporary Drawing," two hundred works by forty American and European artists. Through May 5. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum is closed for renovation until late spring.

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—Terry Winters, who is in his early forties, is a very good, serious painter of organic forms in earthy pigments. His work develops slowly, rather ponderously at times, and might be marvellously well represented by a strictly edited, fast-paced exhibition of, say, fifteen to twenty paintings from the past decade, and a more copious array, perhaps, of works on paper. The Whitney, however, apparently in blithe ignorance of the nature of Winters' endeavor and appeal, has instead mounted a turgid exhibition of more than a hundred paintings and drawings and thirty prints. If this artist's work and reputation weren't so damn solid, this show might do him in. Through May 10.... ¶ A well-framed, expertly installed, and compact exhibition of recent "Pastels" by Joan Mitchell. They're beautiful: vibrant, nimble, and utterly authoritative, though seemingly unfettered. Mitchell is in peak form here. Through June 21.... ¶ A retrospective of photographs by Paul Strand. Through May 17.... ¶ The William Wegman show includes nearly two hundred paintings, drawings, photographs, and videotapes. Through April 19. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Eastern Parkway—Seventy "Destructions," "Accumulations," and "Cachets" by the inimitable French Nouveau Réaliste Arman. Through April 26.... ¶ "The New Merengue," an installation by sculptor Houston Conwill, poet Estella Conwill Majozo, and architect Joseph De Pace. Through May 3.... ¶ "Contemporary Wood Sculpture" includes works by Kenji Fujita, Jane Greengold, and Louise Nevelson, among others. Through June 7.... ¶ "Biomorphicism and Organic Abstraction in Twentieth-Century Decorative Arts." (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—"The Streets of Dai Fau," a show of photographs by Arnold Genthe (1869-1946) which depict San Francisco's Chinatown before 1906. Through June 30. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St.—Three site-specific installations: Sam Gilliam's "Windows Go Orange (e.e. cummings)," Robert Kushner's "Pysanky," and Dale Chihuly's "Niijima Floats.". . . ¶ An exhibition of African textiles woven by means of improvised techniques. Through April 19. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St.—"The Cosmic Dancer." The tenth-century Hindu bronze of Shiva Nataraja, Lord of the Dance, reigns as the centerpiece of this exhibition of fifty bronze, stone, and wood sculptures from India and Southeast Asia. Through June 28. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Jewish Museum, at the New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—"Bridges and Boundaries: African-Americans and American Jews." This show—comprising three hundred and fifty art works, photographs, and documents—explores the complex relationship of coöperation and tension between the two groups. (Open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Sundays, 11 to 5; Thursdays, 11 to 8; Fridays, 11 to 3.)

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—"Walt Whitman and New York." The Long Island-born Brooklynite is celebrated in a show that juxtaposes prose and poetry with nineteenth-century paintings, prints, and photographs. . . . ¶ "Broadway! 125 Years of Musical Theatre." A large assortment of objects—including paintings, posters, scripts, models, sheet music, and memorabilia—from nearly seventy-five productions that have bowed on the Great White Way. First seen in New York at the I.B.M. Gallery last summer. . . . ¶ Fifty paintings, watercolors, and lithographs by the Dutch artist Adriaan Lubbers (1892-1954), whose fascination with New York City is reflected in his urban landscapes. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

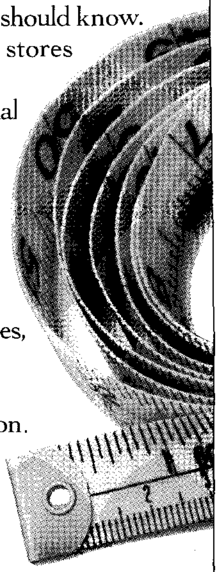
The New Museum, 583 Broadway—"1+1+1," a series of recent sculptural projects by Alfredo Jaar, primarily in the form of large-scale light-box installations. Through April 19. . . . ¶ "The Big Nothing or Le Presque Rien," a group exhibition in which each artist has been asked to contemplate the notions of emptiness and materiality. Through April 19. . . . ¶ Jeffry Mitchell's installation consists of rubber, plaster, and latex tableaux of cartoon figures, toy creatures, and other kitschy icons. Through April 19. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, noon to 8.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—One of the more comprehensive shows in the current crop of Walt Whitman centenary celebrations is "In Life or Death Forever": a hundred and fifty manuscripts, books, photographs, and letters culled from both the Berg and Oscar Lion collections. (Berg Exhibition Room.). . . ¶ "On the Edge" is a show of more than two hundred black-and-white and color photographs from the covers and pages of *Vogue*. (Gottesman Exhibition Hall.). . . ¶ An eclectic collection of recent acquisitions from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. Some of the works are by famous photographers, some are by unknowns; some are generic, some are gems. Through May 2. (Third Floor Gallery.) (Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Jörg Immendorff—A few months ago, Immendorff's unbridled neo-Dada "LIDL" works, from the sixties, were on view here. Now we find the more ideologically constrained but more pictorially vital fruits of this fascinating artist's early-seventies Maoist Party period. Several paintings in this show, and the show itself, are titled "I Wanted to Be an Artist." Immendorff's humorous, cartoonishly doctrinaire tableaux, with their brandished slogans and their strong young men and women of the people—students, of course, and workers—are social realism at its best,



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and they clearly anticipate the artist's famous "Café Deutschland" series. Through April 18. (Werner, 21 E. 67th St.)

SHORT LIST—**GEORGE GROSZ,** Soufer, 1015 Madison Ave., at 78th St. (through April 30); **THEODORE ROSZAK,** Hirschl & Adler, 21 E. 70th St. (through April 11); **DAVID SALLE,** Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. (through April 25); **REEVE SCHLEY,** Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St. (through May 2); **RICHARD SERRA,** Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St. (through April 18), and Pace, 142 Greene St. (through April 25); **JONATHAN SILVER,** Munroe, 9 E. 84th St. (opens at noon Wednesdays through Saturdays, through April 25); **MICHAEL STEINER,** Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. (open Mondays, through April 28); **DONALD SULTAN,** Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. (through April 25).

Photographer Helen Levitt

GALLERIES—57TH STREET AREA

PAUL CADMUS—Because of his full-blown Lawrentian fervors, the up-front homoeroticism that has long pervaded his work, and his rather Flemish, carnivalesque vision of life, the eighty-seven-year-old Cadmus remains a great oddball figure in art—the last of the Magic Realists. "The Fleet's In!," Cadmus's controversial 1934 promenade scene and satire of sailors on shore leave, from the collection of the Navy Museum, cheerfully greets gallerygoers at the door. Crowd scenes, several more of which are on display here, are what Cadmus does best. His other strong suit is the symbolist-horror genre. The theme of his suite titled "The Seven Deadly Sins" (1945-49) was evidently so satisfying to the artist that, in 1983, he appended "The Eighth Sin: Jealousy." Through April 18. (Midtown-Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

DONALD LIPSKI—With these new pieces, Lipski has forsaken his usual humor for poignancy. He has used white candles everywhere—there are short ones in a huge steel ladle, chunky ones filling an old harp case, and a sea of tall skinny ones stuffed into the frame of a wooden bed—and they give the show an enveloping memorial character. Through April 11. (Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St.)

SHORT LIST—**GEORG BASELITZ,** Pace, 32 E. 57th St. (through April 18); **DOZIER BELL,** Schmidt Bingham, 41 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through April 25); **BRAD DAVIS** and **THOMAS LANIGAN-SCHMIDT,** Holly Solomon, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (open Mondays, through April 25); **JANE FREILICHER,** Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St. (through April 25); **RICHARD GERSTL** and **OSKAR KOKOSCHKA,** Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St. (through May 9); **RED GROOMS,** Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through May 2); **MARSDEN HARTLEY,** Babcock, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through April 25); **JOHN HELIKER,** Kraushaar, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through May 2); **BRYAN HUNT,** Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St. (through April 25); **BILL JENSEN** and **MYRON STOUT,** Washburn, 41 E. 57th St. (through May 9); **EPHRAIM RUBENSTEIN,** De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St. (through May 2); **CHARLES SELIGER,** Rosenfeld, 50 W. 57th St. (through May 9); **WILLIAM SCOTT** and **WILLIAM BAILEY,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. (through April 25); **PHILIP WOFFORD** (through April 30) and **ROBERT ARNESON** (through May 29), Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St.; **ALBERT YORK,** Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St. (through April 18).

GALLERIES—SoHo

ROGER BROWN—This exhibition focusses on paintings made to look like circus banners, with circles and bubbles of short texts that emphasize the political complexion of Brown's reassuringly stylized paintings. His themes range from the plight of the American farmer to AIDS. Brown's portrait of Magic Johnson is quite brilliant, from the icon's American-flag-adorned uniform, which elevates him to mythic status, to the detailing of his larger-than-life face, with its boyish smile. It is the visual details, rather than the sarcastic words, which give the works their mesmerizing, often haunting bite: the farmer's rolling brown fields, the otherworldly hairdos of onlookers at a hearing of the "UnAmerican House Activities Committee." An image of an orating Muhammad consists of a dark cloud in the shape of a pair of lips, which fills the sky and smothers people on Earth with its apocalyptic breath. There are also a number of paintings without any text. Especially magnetic is one in which a huge dollar sign hangs over the plains like a doomed zeppelin. Through April 28. (Kind, 136 Greene St.)

MARY CARLSON—There is something creepy about this show, as if the viewer were violating the artist just by glimpsing it. A number of human forms, made out of various flimsy materials—paper and fabric, for instance—are pinned limply to the wall, collapsed on the floor, or pulled taut and hung in a corner. One of them is heavily soiled, as if it had been walked on; another is ripped; and another, in the ultimate expression of suffocation, is made of plastic. These violent pieces seem saturated with self-loathing. Through April 11. (Protetch, 560 Broadway.)

JOHN CURRIN—A provocative exhibition of paintings that spoof studio portraiture. All are of older women, and there's something terribly wrong with each of them. The body of one painfully thin woman is perfectly posed in a state of frozen relaxation. A nude Bea Arthur has been so touched up that her body is as arid as stone, while another woman, in a painting that is gripping for its high degree of abstractness, has simply been relegated to a corner of the canvas. Each background is a single color, ranging from muddied salmon to what might best be described as faded pea green. Through May 2. (Rosen, 130 Prince St.)

HANS-PETER FELDMANN—This near-legendary German artist stopped making art for a decade during the boom-market years, and instead passed his time tending his Düsseldorf gift and furniture shops and dealing in thimbles. He began to produce new work again just a few years ago, and this is his first solo show in New York since the mid-seventies. Feldmann is known for his inexpensive artist's books, a format whose informality is well suited to him; the wall works and object displays here are likewise incidental in spirit, but they suffer from the formality of their presentation. They make the gallery seem an airless tomb—though perhaps this is intended. The artist's displays of common dinner plates and picture frames, and his hand-colored Xeroxes of pictures of Oriental carpets, of Eiffel Tower postcards, and of desserts, are mundane. On the other hand, they do awaken the urge to travel and the urge to eat. Through April 25. (303 Gallery, 89 Greene St.)

PERRY HOBERMAN/JACK RISLEY—Miscellaneous constructions, some banal, others engaging. The most interesting ones are in a group called "Excess Luggage," which consists of old suitcases equipped with peepholes, through which 3-D photos may be viewed. Particularly memorable is a valise with four holes on each side, through which one sees menacing hands with sharp red fingernails. But there are so many of these works that one's attention flags before one has peeped into all of them. / Two new, large cardboard-box sculptures covered with electric blankets—one by pink ones, the other by blue ones—conjure a crafty child at play, and little more. Through April 25. (Postmasters, 80 Greene St.)

JON KESSLER—This artist's newest mechanical sculptures are a rich confluence of mixed metaphors. One is a two-ton music box whose steel drum rotates slowly to pluck a set of metal bars, creating a tune that sounds a bit like Japanese gongs fed through an amplifier with some good old Jimi Hendrix feedback. The tune, the astute listener may realize, comprises the opening and closing phrases of "The Star-Spangled Banner." Kessler has another work that treats of the artist as performer. It is an ingenious mechanical painting rack inside a glass display case, which utilizes a mechanism reminiscent of a dry-cleaner's conveyor belt. The track slowly lifts up a panel, rotates it to the back, and drops it down as it picks up the next one. The paintings inside were made by Christopher Wool; the text is by Paul Auster. Through April 25. (Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St.)

Walter Martin—Fetishized Victoriana is getting tiresome, but this artist has created a piece or two worthy of at least a passing glance. One, a meticulously crafted clock with a few darts stuck in it, is an image of a hopelessly childish desire to stop time. The other, exhibited here before, is a swipe at the art market's insatiable greed. It consists of what looks like a large mechanical egg holding a knife and fork. When a quarter is inserted, the hungry egg jiggles and jolts as it eats up the money, which drops into the base with a hollow *plunk*. But there's such a thing as going too far, and Martin has done just that by displaying two other quarter-hungry "Roly-Polies." They're both too obvious for their own good—one prays, the other wields a sickle—and they trivialize the resonant one. Through April 18. (P.P.O.W, 532 Broadway.)

Catherine Murphy—Murphy is one of the few contemporary artists to invest realistic painting with relevance. This show includes a number of harsh paintings of oddball subjects—a nauseatingly saccharine ballerina motif on a helium balloon, unappetizing refrigerator magnets in the form of various foods, and a large pair of red-lipstick-smeared lips. In contrast, there are also several quite sober images with a great deal of abstraction. One of them, of twigs on a snowy bank, is a gripping metaphor for aging. Two others take on the issue of minimalist form with maximum detail—a richly shadowed blue blanket on a clovered lawn, and a mound of excavated dirt and shale. Falling stylistically somewhere between these two is a painting of a section of a blackboard against a white wall. Through April 11. (Lennon, Weinberg, 580 Broadway.)

Cary Smith—A lovely show of post-minimalist paintings. All of them could be of windows (double hung, mullioned), and what makes them so spiffy is Smith's vigorous use of color. He has an especially keen eye for the kinds of greens—dark lime, olivey mustard, tangy avocado—that tend to inspire the more exotic names on paint chips. Through April 25. (RubinSpangle, 395 West Broadway.)

Mary Weatherford—Photo-silk-screened paintings of forests of thorny rose stems, and of a bloom or two on yucky stained surfaces. Collectively titled "I Never Promised You a Rose Garden," these works amount to a tired technique in search of an idea. Through April 18. (Blum Helman Warehouse, 80 Greene St.)

Short List—**JAMES LEE BYARS**, Boone, 417 West Broadway (through April 25); **MAUREEN CONNOR**, Germans van Eck, 420 West Broadway (through April 18); **WALTER DE MARIA**, Gagosian, 136 Wooster St. (through May 9); **JIŘÍ GEORG DOKOUPIL**, Shafrazi, 130 Prince St. (through April 11); **JULIO GALÁN**, Nosei, 100 Prince St. (through April 25); **RENÉE GREEN**, Hearn, 39 Wooster St. (through May 2); **MICHAEL JOAQUÍN GREY**, Gladstone, 99 Greene St. (through May 9); **GRACE KNOWLTON**, M-13, at 72 Greene St. (through April 25); **ANNETTE LEMIEUX** and **ANNETTE MESSAGER**, Baer, 476 Broome St. (through May 9); **LEONE & MACDONALD**, Fawbush, 76 Grand St. (through May 2); **INGE MAHN**, Brown, 23 Watts St. (through May 2); **BERNARD MAISNER**, Cavin-Morris, 560 Broadway (through April 18); **ALLAN MC COLLUM** and **MASSIMO ANTONACI**, Weber, 142 Greene St. (through April 18); **ELIZABETH MURRAY**, Cooper, 155 Wooster St. (through April 29); **PETER NAGY** and **STEFANO ARIENTI**, Gorney, 100 Greene St. (through May 2); **ANDREI ROITER**, Koury, 89 Greene St. (through April 29); **JOEL SHAPIRO**, Cooper, 149 Wooster St. (through April 11); **SUSAN SILAS**, Fiction-Nonfiction, 21 Mercer St. (through April 18); **RAY SMITH**, Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St. (through April 25); **KEITH SONNIER**, Castelli (420 West Broadway and 578 Broadway), and 65 Thompson Street Gallery (all through April 25).

PHOTOGRAPHY

AROUND this time every year, we like to combine a walk through Central Park with a visit to the Arsenal (Fifth Avenue at 64th Street), which on occasion has photography shows that are worth a look. There's one such exhibition up now—"Alice Austen: The Larky Life." The show was organized last year by the Alice Austen House, in Staten Island, in celebration of the hundred-and-twenty-fifth anniversary of Austen's birth. The pictures are more interesting than they are extraordinary. They're of Austen's friends and family at leisure, and they have an intimate, unself-conscious spirit that reminds us of snapshots that get passed down from one generation to another. The difference is that Austen possessed a definite photographic sensibility, however modest and however buried. These portraits of East Coast American Victorians reflect the artist's sense of play—exposed ankles and people passed out at a tea party are just two examples of the frolics she recorded. For all their warmth and surprising casualness, however, the pictures don't have the freedom, the looseness, or the charm of works by that other well-known photographer of privileged family and friends at play, J. H. Lartigue, who documented this kind of leisure activity when he was much younger than Austen, and a bit later, when technology had made taking pictures easier. Actually, our favorite pictures in Austen's exhibition are the more serious-looking ones—images that were commissioned for use as references for illustrations in "Bicycling for Ladies," published in 1896. For these shots, Austen photographed the gymnast Daisy Elliott, whose how-to demonstrations for the camera appear hilarious today. In a photograph titled "Coasting," for example, Elliott looks more like a person who has just been told she's got Atlas's job of holding up the world than like someone who's having an easy ride.

Helen Levitt—A retrospective of the New York City photographs of Helen Levitt which includes eighty-five black-and-white photographs from the thirties, forties, fifties, and eighties, and color photos from the fifties to the present. Through June 28. (Metropolitan Museum. . . . ¶ A complementary show of photographs, at Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St., starts April 9.)

Short List—**MANUEL ALVAREZ BRAVO** and **STEPHEN BRIGIDI**, Witkin, 415 West Broadway (through April 11); **NANCY BURSON**, Baum, 588 Broadway (through April 18); **ANDREW BUSH**, Lieberman & Saul, 155 Spring St. (through April 18); **LOUISE DAHL-WOLFE**, Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway (through May 2); **BARBARA ESS**, Marcus, 578 Broadway (through April 25); **BISON FRERES** and **RICHARD TEPE**, Lowinsky, 575 Broadway (through May 30); **ROBERT HEINECKEN** and **GARRY WINOGRAND**, Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. (through May 2); **EADWEARD MUYBRIDGE**, International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. (open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8; through April 26); **JOHN PFAHL**, Borden, 560 Broadway (through May 9); **PAUL STRAND**, Whitney Museum of American Art (open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8; through May 17); **SHIKANOSUKE YAGAKI**, Houk Friedman, 1094 Madison Ave., at 82nd St. (through April 25).

MUSIC

THE annual Easter presentations of J. S. Bach's Passion oratorios lost an interesting new entry when financial difficulties—which press hardest, in the current climate, on organizations without long institutional traditions—forced the Orchestra of St. Luke's to cancel a performance with Roger Norrington and a small choir of distinguished singers, who were to have shared the solo work all round. A pity. Mr. Norrington has infused new drama into familiar works and found new surprises in long-examined scores (most recently some of Rossini's, in the televised birthday gala from Avery Fisher Hall); he has that innovator's gift of listening excitedly, as though for the first time. We hope the plan will be brought off in another season. But we're glad several other groups (and churches) are giving their traditional versions. These settings of Matthew and John answer exactly to the idea of "classics": timeless works that become only further enriched with repeated exposure, works that invite fresh interpretation and close analysis but which also bear simple repetition and reward devotees' immersion. Our choice among the performances listed at the moment would probably be the "St. Matthew Passion" at St. Thomas Church, on April 7, with the conductor Gerre Hancock, the boys of his always well-trained choir, and a group of tenor and bass soloists who have worked together on and off for years.

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Avery Fisher Hall, 875-5030; for Alice Tully Hall, 875-5050; for Carnegie Hall, 247-7800; for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719; and for the 92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St., 415-5440.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—**ELEKTRA**, in a new production, with Hildegard Behrens, Deborah Voigt, Mignon Dunn, James King, and Jan-Hendrik Rootering; conducted by James Levine. (April 6 at 8.). . . With Hildegard Behrens, Mechthild Gessendorf, Leonie Rysanek, James King, and Jan-Hendrik Rootering; James Levine. (April 10 and April 14 at 8.). . . **BILLY BUDD**, with Graham Clark, Thomas Hampson, and James Morris; Charles Mackerras. (April 7, April 11, and April 15, all at 8.). . . **LA FANCIULLA DEL WEST**, with Barbara Daniels, Placido Domingo, and Sherrill Milnes; Leonard Slatkin. (April 8 at 8 and April 11 at 1:30.). . . **PARSIFAL**, with Deborah Polaski, Gary Lakes, Ekkehard Wlaschiha, Franz Mazura, and Jan-Hendrik Rootering; James Levine. (April 9 and April 13 at 6:30). (Metropolitan Opera House. The company's season will end on April 18.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall. April 7 at 8: André Previn conducts an all-Beethoven program, comprising the "Coriolanus" Overture, the Fourth Symphony, and the Violin Concerto (featuring the orchestra's concertmaster, Glenn Dicterow). . . . ¶ April 9-11 at 8 and April 14 at 7:30: Klaus Tennstedt conducts Bruckner's Symphony No. 8.

Israel Chamber Orchestra—Shlomo Mintz conducts Schubert's Symphony No. 5 and Odeon Partos's Concertino for Strings, and doubles as violin soloist in Mendelssohn's E-Minor Violin Concerto. A benefit concert. (Carnegie Hall. April 6 at 7:30.)

St. Thomas Choir and Concert Royal—Gerre Hancock directs Bach's "Saint Matthew Passion," with a period-instrument orchestra and an all-male roster of soloists and choristers suggesting the performance practice of

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BY KARL TREUTLER

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At right, the new Audi 100CS.

1992

*Advertisement *See dealer for details.*

the composer's time. Tenor Mark Bleeke sings the part of the Evangelist; other soloists include countertenor Drew Minter and baritone Nathaniel Watson. (St. Thomas Church, Fifth Ave. at 53rd St. 757-7013. April 7 at 7:30.)

JUILLIARD ORCHESTRA—Otto-Werner Mueller conducts Strauss's "Don Juan" and his Horn Concerto No. 1 (featuring Andrea Menousek), as well as Brahms' Symphony No. 4. (Avery Fisher Hall. April 8 at 8.)

NEW YORK CHORAL SOCIETY CHAMBER SINGERS—Penna Rose directs the twenty singers in a wide-ranging program: Bach, Brahms, Britten, Bernstein, Bobby McFerrin, and more. (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. April 8 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

BOSTON SYMPHONY—Seiji Ozawa conducts Ives' Symphony No. 4 and Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto (featuring Gidon Kremer), as well as an arrangement by Mr. Kremer (for violin and orchestra) of music from Arthur Lourié's opera "The Blackamoor of Peter the Great." The Tanglewood Festival Chorus lends its corporate voice in the Ives. (Carnegie Hall. April 8-9 at 8.)

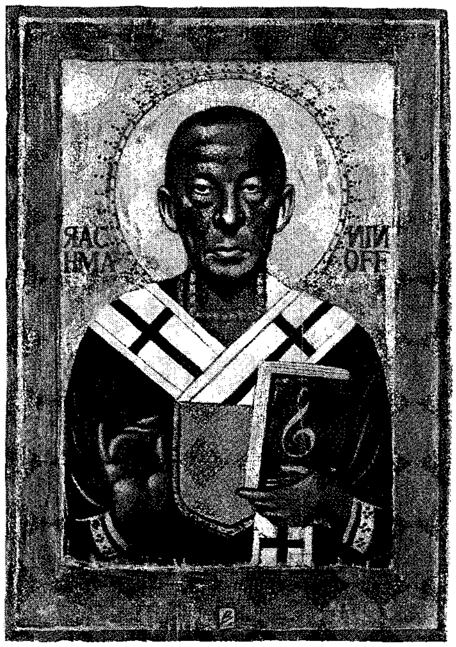
RIVERSIDE SYMPHONY—George Rothman conducts Honegger's Symphony No. 3 and Dutilleux's "Mystère de l'Instant"; mezzo-soprano Charlotte Hellekant is featured in Ravel's "Shéhérazade" and "Cinq Mélodies Populaires Grecques." (Alice Tully Hall. April 9 at 8.)

BACH'S "ST. JOHN PASSION"—ST. CECILIA CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA: David Randolph directing. (Carnegie Hall. April 10 at 8.)... **TRINITY CHURCH CHOIR:** Owen Burdick directs the choir, soloists, and an orchestra. (St. Paul's Chapel, Broadway at Fulton St. April 12 at 4. For information about tickets, call 602-0873.)... **ARTEK ENSEMBLE:** Gwendolyn Toth directs the Choir of St. Francis and her period-instrument ensemble, with the narrative portions and chorales sung in English, and the arias and major choruses in the original German. (St. Francis of Assisi Church, 135 W. 31st St. April 12 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 873-0473.)

AMOR ARTIS CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA—Johannes Somary conducts three obscure works from the eighteenth century: an organ concerto by Pietro Sales (featuring Jane Schatkin Hettrick), the "Missae Beatissimae Virginis Mariae" by Michael Haydn, and Gluck's "De Profundis." (St. Jean Baptiste Church, Lexington Ave. at 76th St. April 10 at 8. For information about tickets, call 874-4513.)

BROOKLYN PHILHARMONIC—In the final concerts of the orchestra's season, Dennis Russell Davies traces a musical genealogy: Handel begat Brahms begat Kagel. At the center of the program stands Brahms' monumental "Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel," a solo-piano masterpiece (played here by Agustin Anievas) that opens with an unadorned statement of Handel's original, an "aria" from a harpsichord suite. Then follows Maurizio Kagel's "Variations Without Fugue," a 1972 work for orchestra and ghostly visitors, which takes Brahms' variations as its point of departure. Also on the program are a Handel concerto grosso and Brahms' A-Minor Double Concerto (featuring violinist William Preucil and cellist Janos Starker). (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. April 10-11 at 8 and April 12 at 3.)

MUSICA SACRA—Richard Westenburg directs Bach's "St. Matthew Passion," with various soloists, an orchestra, and nearly three hundred choristers (including the entire Musica Sacra Chorus and Boys Choir of Harlem). (Carnegie Hall. April 11 at 8.)



Sergei Rachmaninoff

RACHMANINOFF'S VESPERS—Though best known as a twentieth-century remnant of lush late-Romanticism, Sergei Rachmaninoff was also fascinated by the traditional music of the Eastern Orthodox Churches. His last sacred work, the a-cappella "Vsenoshchnoye Bdeniye" (or "The Night Vigil," dating from 1915), stands as a monumental synthesis of Orthodox chant and liturgical choral styles—Kievan, Greek, and others. The composer held his "Vespers" (as it is sometimes called) in highest esteem through the remaining three decades of his life, leaving instructions that it be sung at his own funeral. Dino Anagnost directs tenor soloist Richard Fracker and the Metropolitan Singers/The Greek Choral Society (whose bass section—or some members thereof—will be asked at one point to make the Byzantine cathedral rumble with a low B-Flat). (Holy Trinity Cathedral, 319 E. 74th St. April 12 at 6. For information about tickets, call 704-2100.)

HANDEL'S "MESSIAH"—Composed in a three-week flurry of inspiration late in the summer of 1741, this most celebrated of all choral works was first performed on April 13, 1742, in Dublin's Music Hall, as a benefit for three charities. Charles Jennens, who compiled the libretto (from the King James Version of the Scriptures), termed the work "an entertainment." But when a noble admirer used that word when complimenting the composer following the première, Handel replied "My Lord, I should be sorry if I only entertained them; I wished to make them better." On the two-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of that historic première, Robert Shaw leads Handel's "Messiah," with the Atlanta Symphony Chamber Chorus, the Orchestra of St. Luke's, and soloists Penelope Jensen (soprano), Marietta Simpson (mezzo-soprano), Jon Humphrey (tenor), and Victor Ledbetter (bass). (Carnegie Hall. April 13 at 8.)

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA—At Carnegie Hall. Simon Rattle conducts programs that examine the many new currents of musical expression that composers explored in the years 1911-13. April 14 at 8: Nielsen's Symphony No. 3 (the "Sinfonia Espansiva") and Ravel's "Daphnis et Chloé"; with soloists Elise Ross (soprano) and Robin Buck (baritone).... **NOTE:** In a pre-concert lecture, beginning at 6:45 and open to ticketholders, Lawrence Kramer will speak about "Daphnis et Chloé."... ¶ April 15 at 8: Schoenberg's "Pierrot Lunaire" (with Ms. Ross), Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 1 (with Emanuel Ax), and Debussy's "Images."... **NOTE:** In a pre-concert lecture, beginning at 6:45 and open to ticketholders, Walter Frisch will speak about "Pierrot Lunaire."

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S CHOIR—James Litton directs Fauré's Requiem and "Cantique de Jean Racine," with William Trafka supplying the organ accompaniment. (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. April 15 at 8. Admission by contribution.)

RECITALS

MUSIC TODAY ENSEMBLE—Christopher Kendall conducts the group in music of our century, including Lukas Foss's "Time Cycle" and the première of Sebastian Currier's "Vocalissimus" (both featuring soprano Carmen Pelton). (Walter Reade Theatre, 165 W. 65th St., Plaza Level. April 6 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 875-5050.)

GARRICK OHLSSON—The pianist performs two Beethoven sonatas (Op. 57 and Op. 109), as well as Chopin's Twenty-four Preludes (Op. 28). (Carnegie Hall. April 7 at 8.)

ST. LUKE'S CHAMBER ENSEMBLE—Performing a Michael Haydn divertimento, a new work by Katia Tchemberdji, and (with pianist Lilian Kallir) Dvořák's Piano Quintet (Op. 81). (Merkin Concert Hall. April 7 at 8.)

LIONS GATE TRIO—The ensemble performs works by Fauré, Messiaen, Carter, Ives, and others. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. April 7 at 8.)

AMERICAN STRING QUARTET—Performing Martinů's "Three Madrigals," Beethoven's last quartet (in F-Major, Op. 135), and Mozart's Quintet in E-Flat (K. 614, with violist Michael Tree). (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. April 7 at 8. No tickets necessary.)... ¶ Quartets by Haydn (in F Major, Op. 77, No. 2), Prokofiev (his First), and Beethoven (Op. 131). (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. April 10 at 8.)

JOHN CORRIGAN—Pianist, performing music by Schumann, Liszt, and Alkan. (New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, 122 E. 58th St. 752-1938. April 8 at 7.)

SHANGHAI STRING QUARTET—The ensemble plays Beethoven's C-Minor Quartet (Op. 18, No. 4), Zhou Long's "Song of the Ch'in," and (with the assistance of pianist Tian Jiang) Dvořák's Piano Quintet (Op. 81). (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. April 8 at 8.)

GUARNERI QUARTET—The group's members perform Beethoven's D-Major String Trio (Op. 9, No. 2), Shostakovich's Piano Quintet (with the assistance of Yefim Bronfman), and Smetana's String Quartet No. 1 (subtitled "From My Life," a work of musical autobiography with such details as a high-pitched squeal to portray the onset of the composer's deafness). (Alice Tully Hall. April 8 at 8.)... ¶ Performing quartets by Haydn (in F Minor, Op. 20, No. 5), Hindemith (his Third), and Schubert (in A Minor, D. 804). (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. April 11 at 8.)

CYNTHIA RAIM—Pianist, performing music by Haydn, Schumann, Chopin, and Dvořák. (Weill Recital Hall. April 8 at 8.)

MARK STEINBERG—In his New York début recital, the violinist will perform sonatas by Elgar and Busoni, as well as works by Smetana, Davidovsky, and Bruce Adolphe. Pianist Marija Stoke assists. (Weill Recital Hall. April 9 at 7.)

BARGEMUSIC—Joseph Villa performs piano works by Schumann and Chopin, and colleagues join him for piano quartets by Beethoven (in E-Flat, Op. 18) and Brahms (in A Major, Op. 26). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. April 9 at 7:30 and April 12 at 4.)

ANONYMOUS 4—The vocal quartet performs music from the period of the "Decameron," including works by such trecento composers as Francesco Landini, Jacopo da Bologna, and Lorenzo da Firenze. (St. Michael's Church, Amsterdam Ave. at 99th St. April 10 at 8. Admission by contribution.)

SHEM GUIBBORY—The violinist is joined by friends to perform chamber music by Mozart, Kodály, Françaix, and Brahms (his F-Major String Quintet, Op. 88). (Nicholas Roerich Museum, 319 W. 107th St. April 10 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER—Presenting a piano trio by Haydn, and a horn trio by Ligeti, in addition to chamber works by Hindemith, Stravinsky, and Dvořák (his Piano Quartet, Op. 87); violinist Robert McDuffie, hornist Robert Routch, and pianist William Tritt join the ensemble's regular roster. (Alice Tully Hall. April 10 at 8 and April 12 at 5.)

WAVERLY CONSORT—The early-music group presents music from Iberia, from the time of the Moorish occupation to the era of the *reconquista*, the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, and beyond. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. April 11 at 8.)... **NOTE:** Alejandro Planchart will deliver a lecture on the events of 1492 and how they are reflected in the evening's concert. (Bar Association of the City of New York, 42 W. 44th St. April 11 at 4:30. No tickets necessary.)

CONTINUUM—Exploring the music of Stefan Wolpe, from cabaret-inspired creations of 1929 to a quartet (for clarinet, bass clarinet, violin, and piano) of 1969. (Alice Tully Hall. April 11 at 8.)

LU SIQING AND YEH YING—The violinist and the soprano share a program, with Ms. Yeh singing arias (including one from Jin Xiang's opera "Savage Land") and Mr. Lu performing works by de Falla, Wieniawski, and David Diamond); with assisting artists. (92nd Street Y. April 11 at 8.)

Tadeu Coelho—Flutist, performing works by Prokofiev, Jolivet, and others. (Weill Recital Hall. April 11 at 8.)

Elise Ross—The soprano performs songs by Ives, Bartók, Rachmaninoff, Ravel, Weill, and Canteloube; with pianist Yoko Nozaki. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. April 12 at 2. For information about tickets, call 586-4680.)

Brooklyn Friends of Chamber Music—Students from the Mannes College of Music present a long program that includes solos and duets by Monteverdi, a cantata by Carissimi, Brahms' B-Major Piano Trio, Ravel's String Quartet, and George Crumb's "Black Angels" (for electrified string quartet). (Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, 85 S. Oxford St., Brooklyn. April 12 at 3. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

Richard Goode—The pianist performs Mozart's F-Major Sonata (K. 533/494); Schubert's sonatas in C Minor (D. 958) and A Major (D. 959); and four of Debussy's Preludes. (Avery Fisher Hall. April 12 at 7:30.)

Goliard Concerts—Presenting a wide-ranging program that includes choral works by Brahms and Elgar, songs by Strauss, and a four-hand arrangement of Saint-Saëns' "Carnival of the Animals" (featuring pianists Samuel Sanders and Brian Zeger). (Merkin Concert Hall. April 12 at 7:30.)

Boston Early Music Festival Orchestra Ensemble—Andrew Parrott leads a chamber-scaled reading of Bach's four Orchestral Suites (or "Ouvertures," as the composer called them), with one player on a part. Christopher Krueger plays the flute solos in the second. (Alice Tully Hall. April 12 at 8.)

Vinland Ensemble—The chamber group presents songs and chamber music by Schubert, Lars-Erik Larsson, Paul Ramsier, and others. (Institute of Fine Arts, 1 E. 78th St. April 13 at 7:30. No tickets necessary.)

Gil Shaham and Emanuel Ax—The violinist and the pianist perform sonatas by Beethoven (the "Spring," Op. 24), Brahms (in D Minor, Op. 103), and Debussy. A benefit concert. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. April 13 at 8. For information about tickets, call 870-2288.)

N.Y.U. Chamber Music Society—Presenting new music by Arab composers. (Merkin Concert Hall. April 13 at 8.)

Chelsea Chamber Ensemble—The ensemble presents a little-known "Interlude" for Oboe and Strings (1936) by Gerald Finzi in addition to Dohnányi's Sextet and Dvořák's D-Minor Serenade. (Weill Recital Hall. April 13 at 8.)

Pedro Burmester—In the last of three "Goldfingers," concerts spotlighting pianists who have *not* met with success in high-profile competitions, Mr. Burmester (a Portuguese pianist who failed to progress to the finals of the 1989 Van Cliburn International Competition) performs a program of variations: Mozart's Variations on "Ah! vous dirai-je, maman!" (K. 300e, on a melody known to English-speakers as "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star"); Beethoven's "Thirty-two Variations in C Minor" (WoO 80); and Bach's "Goldberg" Variations. (92nd Street Y. April 14 at 8.). . . **Note:** Members of the audience may remain for a post-concert panel discussion on the pluses and minuses of piano competitions, with Mr. Burmester, pianists William Wolfram and Seymour Lipkin, David Pocock (who runs the iconoclastic competition of the Gilmore International Keyboard Festival, held in Kalamazoo), and Joseph Horowitz (who organized the "Goldfingers" series).

S.E.M. Ensemble—Presenting "early music" of the electronic age: a reconstruction of a 1956 concert of the Cologne Electronic Music Studio, including pieces by Stockhausen, Krenek, and others. (Paula Cooper gallery, 155 Wooster St. April 14 at 8. For information about tickets, call 1-718 243-0964.)

Aysegul Durakoglu—In her New York début recital, the Turkish pianist will perform works by Shostakovich, Schumann (his "Kreisleriana"), Chopin (his B-Minor Sonata), and the Turkish-American composer Kamran Ince. (Merkin Concert Hall. April 15 at 8.)

Jeffrey Siegel—The pianist offers commentary on the piano music of Copland and Bernstein, as well as performances of their works (including the former's "Piano Variations" and the ten of the latter's "Anniversaries"). (92nd Street Y. April 15 at 8.)

Juilliard String Quartet—Playing Mozart: three quartets and (with violist Nobuko Imai) the G-Minor Quintet. (Alice Tully Hall. April 15 at 8.)

JAZZ/POP/ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

The Winans Family—Yes, the *whole* family: Mom and Pop, Marvin, Carvin, Michael, Ronald, BeBe, CeCe, Daniel, David, Angie, and Debbie. The announcement of this all-Winans tour has sent gospel fans into seventh heaven. Enjoy. Also, check out the promising gospel festival at Symphony Space, listed below. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. April 11 at 2, 6:30, and 10:30.)

Pearl Jam—One of the leaders of the Seattle rock scene, Pearl Jam, like Nirvana, redefines heavy metal for the nineties. The grungy guitar songs of this raucous quintet make the shrill vocals and piercing lead guitars of mega-sellers like Mötley Crüe and Poison sound awfully old-fashioned. Lead singer Eddie Vedder has a sexy, husky vocal delivery that brings this band's heavy song structures up to a slow burn. On its début album, "Ten," Pearl Jam has put together a great collection of woozy tunes, and the group sounds as tight as a bar band at closing time. Smokin'. (Limelight, Sixth Ave. at 20th St. 807-7850. April 12 at 11.)

Sarah McLachlan—Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-7171. April 7 at 8.

Fugazi—Palladium, 126 E. 14th St. 473-7171. April 8 at 8.

Metallica—Meadowlands Arena. 1-201 935-3900. April 8 at 8.

Leroy Jenkins—With his Mixed Quintet, the Soldier String Quartet, and a chamber ensemble conducted by Tania León. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. April 9 at 8.)

Dakota Staton—With Sandra Reaves-Phillips and Ernestine Anderson. (Majestic Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 1-718 636-4100. April 11 at 8.)

"New Sounds"—Presenting the Lounge Lizards, the Mikel Rouse Broken Consort, and the Rova Saxophone Quartet. (Merkin Concert Hall. April 12 at 3.)

Tom Paxton—Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 346-1715. April 13 at 8.

Luka Bloom—Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. April 14 at 8.

Gospel Festival—At Symphony Space. April 10 at 8: The Dixie Hummingbirds, the Swan Silvertones, the Angelic Gospel Singers, and McCullough's Sons of Thunder. . . . ¶ April 11 at 8: Marion Williams, the Stars of Faith, and the A.R.C. Gospel Choir.

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Yankees—Opening day is April 7, vs. the Boston Red Sox, at 1. Also vs. the Red Sox, April 9 at 7:30.

Mets—The home opener is April 10, vs. the Montreal Expos, at 1:40. Other games: Vs. the Expos, April 11-12 at 1:40. . . . ¶ Vs. the Philadelphia Phillies, April 13-15 at 7:40.

Knicks—Vs. the Detroit Pistons, April 7. . . . ¶ Vs. the Philadelphia 76ers, April 10. . . . ¶ Vs. the Washington Bullets, April 14. (Game time, 7:30.)

Dakota Staton

Nets—Vs. the Atlanta Hawks, April 7. . . . ¶ Vs. the Cleveland Cavaliers, April 10. (Game time, 7:30.)

Hockey—As of press time, the National Hockey League Players Association was on strike. (The Yankees play at Yankee Stadium, 293-6000; the Mets at Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499; the Knicks at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; and the Nets at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900.)

RACING

Horses—At Aqueduct: Daily, except April 7 and April 12, at 1. . . . **Trotting** at Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights at 8 and Tuesdays at 1. . . . At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Orchids, Orchids, Orchids—A hundred and fifty thousand redolent blossoms will be displayed at the World Financial Center. This year's orchid show features a fragrance competition, which will be judged by a Japanese perfume chemist. But amateurs can smell the flowers anytime. (Battery Park City. April 9-11, from 10 to 8, and April 12, from 10 to 5.)

Play Ball—Now that Daylight Saving Time and baseball's opening day have arrived, the fun can begin in earnest. The people at Brooklyn's Prospect Park are opening their ballfields for the season on April 11 at 10 A.M., and they have invited about a thousand Little Leaguers as well as the Jackie Robinson Marching Band to join in a celebratory parade, along Seventh Ave., from President to 9th Sts.

Bus Stop—The Transit Museum has nine vintage city buses in its somewhat offbeat collection, including a double decker from 1917 and a bus that supposedly resembles Ralph Kramden's, from 1948. These will be on display April 11, from 11 to 4. (Transit Museum, 130 Livingston St., Brooklyn. 1-718 330-5839.)

"Coyote Walks Around"—A festival of Native American arts, which will feature Joe Bruchac, a storyteller; Dan Hill, a drummer and flute player; and the Allegany River Dancers. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. April 12 at 5:30.)

Readings—April 7 at 5:30: Kenneth Koch reads from his own poetry. (William Black Building, Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, 650 W. 168th St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ April 8 at 8: John Ashbery and Pierre Martory read from their own poetry. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.). . . ¶ April 9 at 7: Jeff Giles reads from his book, "Back in the Blue House." (Tower Books, 383 Lafayette St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ April 9 at 8: Allan Gurganus reads from his own fiction. (A Different Light, 548 Hudson St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ April 10 at 8: Ring Lardner, Jr., Malia Scotch Marmo, and Donald Westlake talk about their favorite movies and read movie scenes that never made the final cut. (Universalist Church, 160 Central Park W., at 76th St. For information about tickets, call 875-4128.). . . ¶ April 13 at 7:30: David Lodge reads from his new novel. (Books & Co., 939 Madison Ave., at 74th St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ April 13 at 8: Charles Simic and Tomaž Šalamun read from their own poetry. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440.). . . ¶ April 14 at 6: Dana Gioia and William Logan read from their own poetry. (Donnell Library Auditorium, 20 W. 53rd St. No tickets necessary.)

Talks—April 12 at noon: Slavenka Drakulic, Czeslaw Milosz, Adam Zagajewski, György Konrád, and Tatyana Tolstaya talk about Eastern European nationalism. (Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ April 14 at 6: Malcolm Bilson, the fortepianist, talks about early instruments. (Stanley H. Kaplan Penthouse, Rose Building, 165 W. 65th St. For information about tickets, call 875-5440.)

Memoranda—1991 income taxes are due April 15. . . . ¶ The Double Pier Antiques Show will be held April 11-12 at Pier 90 (Twelfth Ave. at 50th St.) and Pier 92 (Twelfth Ave. at 52nd St.). Pier 90, from 10 to 5; Pier 92, from 10 to 6. Tickets at the door.)

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

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12	13	14	15			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 22.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Edward II" (directed by Derek Jarman).
Theatre 2: "American Dream" (†).
Theatre 3: "Mississippi Masala" (Mira Nair), with Denzel Washington and Sarita Choudhury.
Theatre 4: "Where Angels Fear to Tread" (Charles Sturridge), with Helena Bonham Carter, Judy Davis, Rupert Graves, Giovanni Guidelli, Barbara Jefford, and Helen Mirren.
Theatre 5: "Roadside Prophets" (Abbe Wool), with John Doe and Adam Horovitz.
Theatre 6: "Proof" (Jocelyn Moorhouse), with Hugo Weaving, Genevieve Picot, and Russell Crowe.

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
April 6: Theatre closed.
April 7-9: "The Last of England" (1987, Derek Jarman); and "Caravaggio" (1986, Jarman).
From April 10: "Mississippi Mermaid" (1970, François Truffaut; in French), with Jean-Paul Belmondo and Catherine Deneuve.

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: Through April 9: "My Cousin Vinny" (Jonathan Lynn), with Joe Pesci, Ralph Macchio, Marisa Tomei, Mitchell Whitfield, and Fred Gwynne. From April 10: "FernGully . . . The Last Rainforest" (Bill Kroyer), an animated film.
Theatre 2: "Basic Instinct" (†).
Theatre 3: "My Cousin Vinny."

Loews Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: Through April 9: French Film Festival. From April 10: "Sleepwalkers" (Mick Garris), with Brian Krause, Mädchen Amick, and Alice Krige.
Theatre 2: "Wayne's World" (†).
Theatre 3: "Shadows and Fog" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Mambo Kings" (†).
Theatre 5: "Thunderheart" (Michael Apted), with Val Kilmer, Sam Shepard, Graham Greene, and Fred Ward.
Theatre 6: "Ladybugs" (Sidney J. Furie), with Rodney Dangerfield.
Theatre 7: "The Power of One" (John G. Avildsen), with Stephen Dorff, Armin Mueller-Stahl, John Gielgud, and Morgan Freeman.

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: "Kafka" (Steven Soderbergh), with Jeremy Irons.
Theatre 2: "Grand Canyon" (Lawrence Kasdan), with Kevin Kline.
Theatre 3: "Daughters of the Dust" (1991, Julie Dash).
Theatre 4: Through April 9: "Noises Off" (†). From April 10: "Newsies" (Kenny Ortega), with Christian Bale, Bill Pullman, Ann-Margret, and Robert Duvall.
Theatre 5: "Hear My Song" (†).
Theatre 6: "Beauty and the Beast" (†).
Theatre 7: "Straight Talk" (Barnet Kellman), with Dolly Parton and James Woods.

Loews 19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "Basic Instinct" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Lawnmower Man" (Brett Leonard), with Jeff Fahey and Pierce Brosnan.
Theatre 3: "The Prince of Tides" (Barbra Streisand), with Streisand, Nick Nolte, and Blythe Danner.
Theatre 4: "Basic Instinct" (†).
Theatre 5: "JFK" (†).
Theatre 6: "Bugsy" (†).

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"Rock-A-Doodle" (Don Bluth), an animated film.

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
Through April 9: "White Men Can't Jump" (†).
From April 10: "FernGully . . . The Last Rainforest" (Bill Kroyer), an animated film.

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "Beethoven" (Brian Levant), with Charles Grodin, Bonnie Hunt, and Dean Jones.
Theatre 2: "Straight Talk" (Barnet Kellman), with Dolly Parton and James Woods.
Theatre 3: Through April 9: "Beauty and the Beast" (†). From April 10: "Newsies" (Kenny Ortega), with Christian Bale, Bill Pullman, Ann-Margret, and Robert Duvall.
Theatre 4: "The Cutting Edge" (Paul M. Glaser), with D. B. Sweeney and Moira Kelly.

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Wayne's World" (†).
Theatre 2: "Basic Instinct" (†).
Theatre 3: Through April 9: "Ladybugs" (Sidney J. Furie), with Rodney Dangerfield. From April 10: "Sleepwalkers" (Mick Garris), with Brian Krause, Mädchen Amick, and Alice Krige.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"My Cousin Vinny" (Jonathan Lynn), with Joe Pesci, Ralph Macchio, Marisa Tomei, Mitchell Whitfield, and Fred Gwynne.

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Bugsy" (†).

Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "Straight Talk" (Barnet Kellman), with Dolly Parton and James Woods.
Theatre 2: Through April 9: "Ladybugs" (Sidney J. Furie), with Rodney Dangerfield. From April 10: "Newsies" (Kenny Ortega), with Christian Bale, Bill Pullman, Ann-Margret, and Robert Duvall.

Crown Gotham, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"My Cousin Vinny" (Jonathan Lynn), with Joe Pesci, Ralph Macchio, Marisa Tomei, Mitchell Whitfield, and Fred Gwynne.

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Where Angels Fear to Tread" (Charles Sturridge), with Helena Bonham Carter, Judy Davis, Rupert Graves, Giovanni Guidelli, Barbara Jefford, and Helen Mirren.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "White Men Can't Jump" (†).
Theatre 2: "White Men Can't Jump" (†).

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"The Lawnmower Man" (Brett Leonard), with Jeff Fahey and Pierce Brosnan.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Fried Green Tomatoes" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Power of One" (John G. Avildsen), with Stephen Dorff, Armin Mueller-Stahl, John Gielgud, and Morgan Freeman.

Art East Cinema, 1st Ave. at 60th. (644-1111)
"Europa Europa" (Agnieszka Holland, in German and Russian).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "Beauty and the Beast" (†).
Theatre 2: "Lovers" (Vicente Aranda, in Spanish), with Victoria Abril, Jorge Sanz, and Maribel Verdu.
Theatre 3: "Hear My Song" (†).

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)
Theatre 1: "Beethoven" (Brian Levant), with Charles Grodin, Bonnie Hunt, and Dean Jones.
Theatre 2: "This Is My Life" (†).
Theatre 3: "Thunderheart" (Michael Apted), with Val Kilmer, Sam Shepard, Graham Greene, and Fred Ward.
Theatre 4: "Rock-A-Doodle" (Don Bluth), an animated film.
Theatre 5: Through April 9: (Matinées only) "Beethoven"; and (evenings only) "Thunderheart." From April 10: "FernGully . . . The Last Rainforest" (Bill Kroyer), an animated film.
Theatre 6: Through April 9: "The Cutting Edge" (Paul M. Glaser), with D. B. Sweeney and Moira Kelly. From April 10: "Sleepwalkers" (Mick Garris), with Brian Krause, Mädchen Amick, and Alice Krige.

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "JFK" (†).
Theatre 2: "Basic Instinct" (†).

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
Through April 9: "Under Suspicion" (Simon Moore), with Liam Neeson and Laura San Giacomo.
From April 10: "The Player" (Robert Altman), with Tim Robbins.

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Wayne's World" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Mambo Kings" (†).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Mediterraneo" (Gabriele Salvatores, in Italian).

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Shadows and Fog" (†).

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Ladybugs" (Sidney J. Furie), with Rodney Dangerfield.

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "White Men Can't Jump" (†).
Theatre 2: "Beethoven" (Brian Levant), with Charles Grodin, Bonnie Hunt, and Dean Jones.

Loews Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)
Theatre 1: "The Mambo Kings" (†).
Theatre 2: "Wayne's World" (†).
Theatre 3: "Basic Instinct" (†).
Theatre 4: (Matinées only) "Rock-A-Doodle" (Don Bluth), an animated film; and (evenings only) "Mississippi Masala" (Mira Nair), with Denzel Washington and Sarita Choudhury.
Theatre 5: Through April 9: "The Cutting Edge" (Paul M. Glaser), with D. B. Sweeney and Moira Kelly. From April 10: "FernGully . . . The Last Rainforest" (Bill Kroyer), an animated film.
Theatre 6: "Thunderheart" (Michael Apted), with Val Kilmer, Sam Shepard, Graham Greene, and Fred Ward.
Theatre 7: Through April 9: "The Power of One" (John G. Avildsen, with Stephen Dorff, Armin Mueller-Stahl, John Gielgud, and Morgan Freeman. From April 10: "Sleepwalkers" (Mick Garris), with Brian Krause, Mädchen Amick, and Alice Krige.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: Through April 9: "Beauty and the Beast" (†). From April 10: "Newsies" (Kenny Ortega), with Christian Bale, Bill Pullman, Ann-Margret, and Robert Duvall.
Theatre 2: "Straight Talk" (Barnet Kellman), with Dolly Parton and James Woods.

WEST SIDE

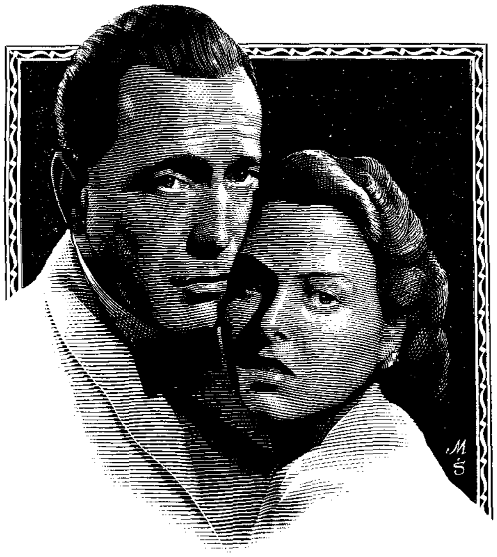
Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: Through April 7: "The Ear" (1969, directed by Karel Kachyna; in Czech). From April 8: "Rock Soup" (1991, Lech Kowalski).
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: Through April 7: "The Cameraman" (1928, Edward Sedgwick; silent), with Buster Keaton. From April 8: "Mindwalk" (Bernt Capra), with Liv Ullmann, Sam Waterston, and John Heart.

Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "The Cutting Edge" (Paul M. Glaser), with D. B. Sweeney and Moira Kelly.
Theatre 2: "Fried Green Tomatoes" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Beethoven" (Brian Levant), with Charles Grodin, Bonnie Hunt, and Dean Jones.
Theatre 2: "White Men Can't Jump" (†).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: Through April 9: "The Puerto Rican Mambo (Not a Musical)" (Ben Model), with Luis Caballero. From April 10: "The Restless Conscience" (Hava Kohav Beller), a documentary.
Theatre 2: "Europa Europa" (Agnieszka Holland, in German and Russian).
Theatre 3: "The Double Life of Véronique" (Krzysztof Kieslowski; in French and Polish), with Irène Jacob and Philippe Volter.
Theatre 4: Through April 9: "35 Up" (Michael Apted), a documentary. From April 10: "In the Shadow of the Stars" (Irving Saraf and Allie Light).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: Through April 9: "The Cutting Edge" (Paul M. Glaser), with D. B. Sweeney and Moira Kelly. From April 10: "Sleepwalkers" (Mick Garris), with Brian Krause, Mädchen Amick, and Alice Krige.
Theatre 2: "My Cousin Vinny" (Jonathan



Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman in "Casablanca"

Lynn), with Joe Pesci, Ralph Macchio, Marisa Tomei, Mitchell Whitfield, and Fred Gwynne.
Theatre 3: "Fried Green Tomatoes" (†).
Theatre 4: "My Cousin Vinny."
Theatre 5: Through April 9: "Beethoven" (Brian Levant), with Charles Grodin, Bonnie Hunt, and Dean Jones. From April 10: "FernGully . . . The Last Rainforest" (Bill Kroyer), an animated film.
Theatre 6: "Straight Talk" (Barnet Kellman), with Dolly Parton and James Woods.
Theatre 7: "Thunderheart" (Michael Apted), with Val Kilmer, Sam Shepard, Graham Greene, and Fred Ward.
Theatre 8: Through April 9: "Ladybugs" (Sidney J. Furie), with Rodney Dangerfield. From April 10: "The Player" (Robert Altman), with Tim Robbins.
Theatre 9: "American Me" (Edward James Olmos).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Wayne's World" (†).
Theatre 2: "White Men Can't Jump" (†).
Theatre 3: Through April 9: "White Men Can't Jump" (†). From April 10: "Newsies" (Kenny Ortega), with Christian Bale, Bill Pullman, Ann-Margret, and Robert Duvall.

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Beauty and the Beast" (†).

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "JFK" (†).
Theatre 2: "Rock-A-Doodle" (Don Bluth), an animated film.
Theatre 3: "Edward II" (Derek Jarman).
Theatre 4: "The Prince of Tides" (Barbra Streisand), with Streisand, Nick Nolte, and Blythe Danner.
Theatre 5: Through April 9: "The Cutting Edge" (Paul M. Glaser), with D. B. Sweeney and Moira Kelly. From April 10: "FernGully . . . The Last Rainforest" (Bill Kroyer), an animated film.
Theatre 6: "Beethoven" (Brian Levant), with Charles Grodin, Bonnie Hunt, and Dean Jones.

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
Through April 14: "Thunderheart" (Michael Apted), with Val Kilmer, Sam Shepard, Graham Greene, and Fred Ward.
From April 15: "City of Joy" (Roland Joffé), with Patrick Swayze, Pauline Collins, and Om Puri.

Loews Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
Through April 9: "JFK" (†).
From April 10: "Casablanca" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Othello" (1952, Orson Welles), with Welles.

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "Mississippi Masala" (Mira Nair), with Denzel Washington and Sarita Choudhury.
Theatre 2: "This Is My Life" (†).

Loews Fine Arts, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"Howards End" (James Ivory), with Anthony Hopkins, Vanessa Redgrave, Helena Bonham Carter, Emma Thompson, and James Wilby.

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Ruby" (John Mackenzie), with Danny Aiello.

Loews Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Shadows and Fog" (†).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"Beethoven" (Brian Levant), with Charles Grodin, Bonnie Hunt, and Dean Jones.

Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Raise the Red Lantern" (Zhang Yimou; in Chinese).
Theatre 2: "Toto le Heros" (Jaco Van Dormael; in French), with Michel Bouquet and Mireille Perrier.
Theatre 3: "Delicatessen" (Jean-Pierre Jeunet and Marc Caro, in French), with Dominique Pinon and Marie-Laure Dougnac.

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Fried Green Tomatoes" (†).

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Wayne's World" (†).
Theatre 2: "Thunderheart" (Michael Apted), with Val Kilmer, Sam Shepard, Graham Greene, and Fred Ward.
Theatre 3: "Basic Instinct" (†).
Theatre 4: Through April 9: "Ladybugs" (Sidney J. Furie), with Rodney Dangerfield. From April 10: "Newsies" (Kenny Ortega), with Christian Bale, Bill Pullman, Ann-Margret, and Robert Duvall.
Theatre 5: "The Mambo Kings" (†).
Theatre 6: Through April 9: "The Power of One" (John G. Avildsen), with Stephen Dorff, Armin Mueller-Stahl, John Gielgud, and Morgan Freeman. From April 10: "Sleepwalkers" (Mick Garris), with Brian Krause, Mädchen Amick, and Alice Krige.

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "My Cousin Vinny" (Jonathan Lynn), with Joe Pesci, Ralph Macchio, Marisa Tomei, Mitchell Whitfield, and Fred Gwynne.
Theatre 2: Through April 9: "The Cutting Edge" (Paul M. Glaser), with D. B. Sweeney and Moira Kelly. From April 10: "FernGully . . . The Last Rainforest" (Bill Kroyer), an animated film.

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "White Men Can't Jump" (†).
Theatre 2: "Rock-A-Doodle" (Don Bluth), an animated film.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "My Cousin Vinny" (directed by Jonathan Lynn), with Joe Pesci, Ralph Macchio, Marisa Tomei, Mitchell Whitfield, and Fred Gwynne.
Theatre 2: "My Cousin Vinny."
Theatre 3: "The Power of One" (John G. Avildsen), with Stephen Dorff, Armin Mueller-Stahl, John Gielgud, and Morgan Freeman.
Theatre 4: "Basic Instinct" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Lawnmower Man" (Brett Leonard), with Jeff Fahey and Pierce Brosnan.
Theatre 6: "Basic Instinct" (†).
Theatre 7: "White Men Can't Jump" (†).

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
Through April 9: "Straight Talk" (Barnet Kellman), with Dolly Parton and James Woods.
From April 10: "Newsies" (Kenny Ortega), with Christian Bale, Bill Pullman, Ann-Margret, and Robert Duvall.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: "Wayne's World" (†).
Theatre 2: "Bugsy" (†).
Theatre 3: Through April 9: "Noises Off" (†). From April 10: "Straight Talk" (Barnet Kellman), with Dolly Parton and James Woods.

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
Through April 9: "Ladybugs" (Sidney J. Furie), with Rodney Dangerfield, Jackée, Jonathan Brandis, Ilene Graff, and Vinessa Shaw.
From April 10: "Sleepwalkers" (Mick Garris), with Brian Krause, Mädchen Amick, and Alice Krige.

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: Through April 9: "Beethoven" (Brian Levant), with Charles Grodin, Bonnie Hunt, and Dean Jones. From April 10: "FernGully . . . The Last Rainforest" (Bill Kroyer), an animated film.
Theatre 2: "American Me" (Edward James Olmos).

REVIVAL HOUSES

Le Cinematographe, 15 Vandam St. (675-4680)
"Alex" (directed by Teresa Villaverde Cabral, in Portuguese); and "Numero Deux" (1975, Jean-Luc Godard; in French).

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
April 6: "Colonel Redl" (1985, István Szabó; in German), with Klaus Maria Brandauer; and "Hey Babu Riba" (1987, Jovan Acin; in Serbo-Croatian).
April 7: "Leningrad Cowboys Go America" (1990, Aki Kaurismaki); and "Love Without Pity" (1990, Eric Rochant; in French).
April 8-9: "My Father's Glory" (1991, Yves Robert; in French), with Julien Ciamaca; and "My Mother's Castle" (1991, Robert; in French), with Ciamaca.
April 10-11: "Jesus of Montreal" (1990, Denys Arcand; in French), with Lothaire Bluteau; and "Wings of Desire" (1988, Wim Wenders; in German, French, and English), with Bruno Ganz, Solveig Dommartin, and Otto Sander.
April 12-13: "Carmen" (1983, Carlos Saura; in Spanish), with Antonio Gades; and "El Amor Brujo" (1986, Saura; in Spanish).
April 14: "Open Doors" (1991, Gianni Ameio; in Italian), with Gian Maria Volonte, Ennio Fantastichini, Renzo Giovampietro, and Renato Carpentieri; and "Europa Europa" (Agnieszka Holland, in German and Russian).
From April 15: "Liquid Dreams."

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Through April 9: "The Wages of Fear" (1953, Henri-Georges Clouzot; in French), with Yves Montand, Charles Vanel, Folco Lulli, and Peter Van Eyck.
From April 10: "Casablanca" (†).

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
April 6: "Woman in the Dunes" (1964, Hiroshi Teshigahara; in Japanese), with Eiji Okada; and "Face of Another" (1966, Teshigahara; in Japanese), with Tatsuya Nakadai and Okada.
April 7: "Slaughterhouse-Five" (1972, George Roy Hill), with Michael Sacks; and "Catch-22" (1970, Mike Nichols), with Alan Arkin, Jon Voight, Richard Benjamin, Art Garfunkel, Buck Henry, Martin Balsam, Orson Welles, Bob Balaban, Paula Prentiss, Martin Sheen, Jack Gilford, Peter Bonerz, Charles Grodin, Tony Perkins, Bob Newhart, and Marcel Dalio.
April 8: "Morning Glory" (1933, Lowell Sherman), with Katharine Hepburn and Douglas Fairbanks, Jr; and "Sylvia Scarlet" (1936, George Cukor), with Katharine Hepburn, Cary Grant, Brian Aherne, and Edmund Gwenn.
April 9: "Suspicion" (1941, Alfred Hitchcock), with Cary Grant and Joan Fontaine; and "Mr. and Mrs. Smith" (1941, Hitchcock), with Carole Lombard, Robert Montgomery, and Gene Raymond.
April 10-11: "Breakfast at Tiffany's" (1961, Blake Edwards), with Audrey Hepburn, George Peppard, Patricia Neal, Buddy Ebsen, Martin Balsam, and Mickey Rooney; and "Roman Holiday" (1953, William Wyler), with Hepburn, Gregory Peck, and Eddie Albert.
April 12: "The Last Wave" (1977, Peter Weir), with Richard Chamberlain, Gulpilil, and Olivia Hamnett; and "Gallipoli" (†).
April 13: "La Grande Illusion" (1937, Jean Renoir; in French), with Erich von Stroheim, Jean Gabin, Pierre Fresnay, and Marcel Dalio; and "La Bête Humaine" (†).
April 14: "Desire" (see page 23); and "A Foreign Affair" (†).
April 15: "Kamikaze '89" (1982, Wolf Gremm; in German), with Rainer Werner Fassbinder; and "Nosferatu, the Vampyre" (1979, Werner Herzog; in German), with Klaus Kinski, Isabelle Adjani, and Bruno Ganz.

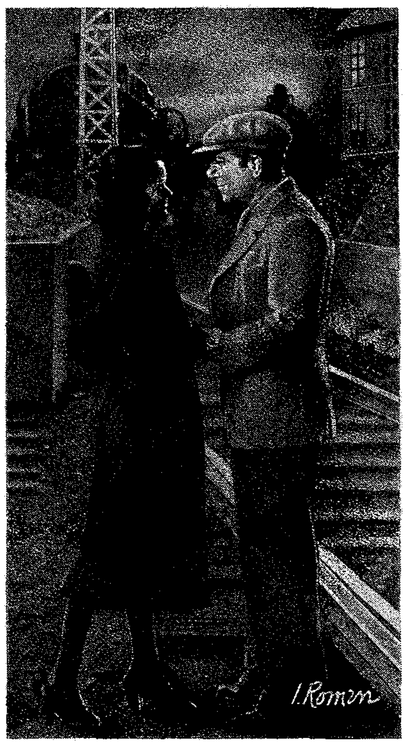
FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)—April 6 at 2:30 and April 9 at 6: "Moulin Rouge" (1953, directed by John Huston), with José Ferrer, Colette Marchand, Suzanne Flon, and Zsa Zsa Gabor. . . . ¶ April 6 at 6 and April 9 at 2:30: "Limite" (1929, Mario Peixoto; a Brazilian silent film). . . . ¶ April 7 at 3 and 6: "La Demoiselle Sauvage" (1991, Léa Pool; a Canadian film, in French), with Patricia Tulasne, Matthias Habich, and Michel Voita. . . . ¶ April 9 at 3 and 6: "The Blue Cows of Salsigne" (1991, Catherine Pozzo di Borgo; in French), a documentary. . . . ¶ April 10 at 2:30: "Bleak Moments" (1971, Mike Leigh),

MOVIE HOUSES–Cont'd

with Anne Raitt, Sarah Stephenson, and Eric Allan. . . . ¶ April 10 at 6: "Nuts in May" (1976, Leigh), with Roger Sloman, Alison Steadman, and Anthony O'Donnell. . . . ¶ April 11 at 2: "Hard Labour" (1973, Leigh), with Liz Smith, Clifford Kershaw, and Polly Hemingway. . . . ¶ April 11 at 5: "Grown-Ups" (1980, Leigh), with Philip Davis, Lesley Manville, and Sam Kelly. . . . ¶ April 12 at 2: "Four Days in July" (1984, Leigh), with Brid Brennan, Desmond McAleer, and Charles Lawson. . . . ¶ April 12 at 5: "Meantime" (1983, Leigh), with Tim Roth, Marion Bailey, and Gary Oldman. . . . ¶ April 13 at 2:30: "High Hopes" (1988, Leigh), with Philip Davis, Ruth Sheen, and Edna Dore. . . . ¶ April 13 at 6: "Who's Who" (1978, Leigh), with Richard Kane, Joolia Cappleman, and Simon Chandler. . . . ¶ April 13 at 6:30: A program of films by Rose Lowder, who will be present. . . . ¶ April 14 at 2:30: "Life Is Sweet" (1990, Leigh), with Alison Steadman, Jim Broadbent, Claire Skinner, Joan Horrocks, and Timothy Spall. . . . ¶ April 14 at 6: "The Kiss of Death" (1977, Leigh), with David Threlfall, John Wheatley, and Kay Adshead.

WALTER READE THEATRE, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—April 7 at 2 and April 8 at 6:30: "Ordet" (1955, Carl Dreyer; in Danish). . . . ¶ April 7 at 4:30, April 8 at 2 and 9, April 9 at 4:15, and April 10 at 4: "A Man Escaped" (1956, Robert Bresson; in French), with François Leterrier. . . . ¶ April 8 at 4:15, April 9 at 2 and 9, and April 10 at 6: "Demon!" (1977, Larry Cohen), wtih Tony Lo Bianco, Sandy Dennis, Sylvia Sidney, and Sam Levene. . . . ¶ April 9 at 6:30 and April 10 at 2: "God's Angry Man" (1980, Werner Herzog) and "Huie's Sermon" (1980, Herzog). . . . ¶ April 10-11 at 8 and 9:30, April 12 at 8:15 and 9:45, April 13 at 6:30, 8, and 9:30, April 14 at 10, and April 15 at 2, 7:30, 9, and 10:30: "The Hours and Times" (1991, Christopher Münch), with Ian Hart, David Angus, and Stephanie Pack. . . . ¶ April 11 at 3:45, April 12 at 6:15, and April 13 at 4:30: "Cape Fear" (1962, J. Lee Thompson), with Gregory Peck, Robert Mitchum, and Polly Bergen. . . . ¶ April 11 at 5:45, April 12 at 3:45, and April 13 at 2: "To Kill a Mockingbird" (†). . . . ¶ April 14 at 2 and 6 and April 15 at 5:15: "Gentleman's Agreement" (1947, Elia Kazan), with Peck, Dorothy McGuire, and John Garfield. . . . ¶ April 14 at 4:15 and 8:15 and April 15 at 3:30: "The Gunfighter" (1950, Henry King), with Peck, Millard Mitchell, and Helen Westcott.



Simone Simon and Jean Gabin in "La Bête Humaine"

MUSEUM OF TELEVISION AND RADIO, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—A Dennis Potter retrospective. April 9 at 5:30: "Blackeyes, Parts 1-2" (1989, BBC), with Michael Gough, Carol Royle, Nigel Planer, and Gina Bellman. . . . ¶ April 10 at 6: "Blackeyes, Parts 3-4.". . . ¶ April 11 at 12:30: "Blackeyes, Parts 1-4." . . . ¶ April 12 at 2:30: "Stand Up, Nigel Barton" (1965, BBC), with Keith Barron and Jack Woolgar; and "Vote, Vote, Vote for Nigel Barton" (1965, BBC), with Barron, Valerie Gearon, and John Bailey.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—"Borders and Barrios: The Chicano in Hollywood Film, 1908-87." April 11 at 2: "A Medal for Benny" (1945, Irving Pichel), with Dorothy Lamour and Arturo de Cordova. . . . ¶ April 11 at 4: "My Man and I" (1952, William Wellman), with Shelley Winters, Ricardo Montalban, Wendell Corey, and Claire Trevor. . . . ¶ April 12 at 2: "Right Cross" (1950, John Sturges), with June Allyson, Dick Powell, and Montalban. . . . ¶ April 12 at 4: "The Ring" (1952, Kurt Neumann), with Rita Moreno, Gerald Mohr, and Lola Rios.

ASIA SOCIETY, Park Ave. at 70th St. (517-2742)—Films by Zhang Yimou, actor. April 10 at 6: "A Terra-Cotta Warrior" (1990, Ching Siu Tung; in Mandarin). . . . ¶ April 10 at 8:30: "Old Well" (1987, Wu Tianming; in Mandarin).

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)—April 10 at 7: "Zvenigora" (1928, Alexander Dovzhenko; a Russian silent film). . . . ¶ April 10 at 9: A program of short films by Leah Singer, Storm De Hirsch, and others. . . . ¶ April 11 at 2: "The Red Balloon" (†); "The Dentist" (1932, Leslie Pearce), with W. C. Fields; and two Charlie Chaplin short films—"The Fireman" (1916) and "One A.M." (1916). . . . ¶ April 11 at 4: "All Flesh Is Grass" (1988, Susan Oxtoby) and "Through and Through" (1991, Barbara Sternberg). . . . ¶ April 11 at 5:30: "The Mirage" (1958, Peter Weiss). . . . ¶ April 11 at 7 and 9: "Just Visiting This Planet" (1991, Peter Sempel). . . . ¶ April 12 at 2 and 6: Two films by Walter Gutman. . . . ¶ April 12 at 4: "Passage Through a Ritual" (1991, Stan Brakhage). . . . ¶ April 12 at 8 and 10: "Dandy" (1988, Peter Sempel).

DONNELL LIBRARY CENTER, 20 W. 53rd St. (621-0619)—April 14 at noon: "Witchcraft Through the Ages" (1922, Benjamin Christensen; a Swedish silent film).

ADAM CLAYTON POWELL, JR., State Office Building, 163 W. 125th St. (873-5040)—April 9 at 1, 3:55, and 6:50: "Hangin' with the Homeboys" (1991, Joseph B. Vasques) and "Straight Out of Brooklyn" (1991, Matty Rich). . . . ¶ April 10 at 1, 4:20, and 7:45: "Boyz N the Hood" (1991, John Singleton) and "Hangin' with the Homeboys."

SYMPHONY SPACE, B'way at 95th St. (864-5400)—April 13 at 7:30: "Babette's Feast" (1988, Gabriel Axel; in Danish and French), with Stéphane Audran.

FLORENCE GOULD HALL, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—April 8 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "The Double Life of Véronique" (1991, Krzysztof Kieslowski; in French and Polish), with Irène Jacob and Philippe Volter. . . . ¶ April 15 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9:30: "The Wages of Fear" (1953, Henri-Georges Clouzot; in French), with Yves Montand, Charles Vanel, Folco Lulli, and Peter Van Eyck.

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, *Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow.)*

AMERICAN DREAM—Barbara Kopple's documentary, about a strike in a Minnesota meatpacking plant, is a lucid and unfussy piece of movie journalism which manages to be as complexly affecting as a great novel. The story that she tells here is a terrifying one. The workers at the Austin, Minnesota, plant of Geo. A. Hormel & Company decide to go on strike on August 17, 1985, rather than accept a rollback of their wages and benefits. The union, Local P-9 of the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, is led by a militant president, Jim Guyette, and a fiery free-lance consultant, Ray Rogers. Together, Guyette and Rogers create a terrific spirit of energy and resolve in the rank and file. But Lewie Anderson, a veteran negotiator for the international union, thinks that their strategy is "doomed." As the strike wears on, our reactions to what we're seeing become more volatile. Our hearts are with the pumped-up rank and file of P-9, but our heads, increasingly (and surprisingly), are with the pragmatic Anderson: his anaylsis of the local's chances against the company proves accurate in virtually every particular. The defeat of the stubborn P-9ers is agonizing to watch, and we begin to realize that Kopple's apparently even tone has nothing to do with objectivity or resignation—that it is, rather, the exaggerated calm of deep shock, the voice of an eyewitness to a smashup on the highway. The movie embodies a kind of tragic understanding of American life—tragic *in the original and the fullest sense,* in which the spectacle of unspeakable calamity produces pity and terror and then an unforeseeable and penetrating clarity. This is a masterpiece of social art. Academy Award for best documentary in 1991.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 3/23/92.) (Angelika Film Center.)

BASIC INSTINCT—A vicious, grindingly manipulative urban mystery that uses a thick atmosphere of S & M kinkiness to distract the audience from the story's thinness and inanity. Michael Douglas plays a cop with a "dark side." Sharon Stone plays a rich, beautiful bisexual novelist who is the prime suspect in a murder case. He falls in love with her, and the two of them breathe heavily through the rest of the picture. Stone has a few bright moments early on. But our basic instinct as we watch Douglas's strenuous grimaces of sexual transport is to flee the theatre. And the mystery is so ineptly constructed that it's not much fun trying to work out the solution. We sense that the screenwriter, Joe Eszterhas, and the director, Paul Verhoeven, don't have any respect for the genre—that they're too jaded to care about anything but giving us enough voyeuristic jolts to keep us awake. When the picture is over, we realize that the only suspense that it has produced effectively is a weird kind of ideological suspense. Will the movie take its smarmy misogyny all the way, or will it pull back in the end? It goes all the way. Also with George Dzundza and Jeanne Tripplehorn; there's a very peculiar cameo by Dorothy Malone.—T.R. (4/6/92) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Gemini, Loews Orpheum VII, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST—It's got storytelling vigor and clarity, bright, eclectic animation, and a frisky musical wit. In this Disney version of the fairy tale, Belle (the voice of Paige O'Hara) is a book-reading French provincial girl—a virtuous sort of Mademoiselle Bovary. She dreams of a Prince Charming but gets more than she bargains for when she becomes hostage to the buffalolike Beast (the surprisingly orotund Robby Benson). Underneath his fang-gnashing glower, he's a prisoner of adolescence—unlike Peter Pan, he wants to grow up. He's the opposite of Belle's lunkheaded village suitor, Gaston (Richard White), a narcissistic macho man. Throughout, the Howard Ashman–Alan Menken score is clever and fluid in the best Lerner and Loewe manner, with flashes of oddball humor that keep everything light and bouncy. (Gaston's theme song trumps "C'est Moi," from "Camelot.") There's a great cast of supporting utensils at the Beast's enchanted castle, led by Jerry Orbach in an ebullient vocal turn as the Chevalier-like candleholder, Lumiere. David Ogden Stiers is Cogsworth, the mantel clock; Angela Lansbury is Mrs. Potts, the teapot; and Jo Anne Worley is the Wardrobe. There isn't anything particularly haunting, *"Desire" (playing April 14, at Theatre 80 St. Marks) is a high-style comic romance with real bounce to it. Starring Gary Cooper as a Detroit automotive engineer and Marlene Dietrich as a European jewel thief in aristocrat's clothing, this 1936 Ernst Lubitsch production, directed by Frank Borzage, weds the rollicking spirit of a road movie to the silky, seductive cleverness of an upscale, sex-charged con game. Dietrich works an exquisite hustle in Paris just as Cooper is finishing up at his company's French headquarters and leaving for a two-week vacation in Spain. As Dietrich makes her escape, they keep bumping into each other on the winding road to Iberia, with Cooper growing more insulted, then more smitten, at every stop. Jumping off from a play by Hans Szekely and R.A. Stemmle, the screenwriters (Samuel Hoffenstein, Waldemar Young, and Edwin Justus Mayer) thread the ensuing complications with light-fingered finesse, as if they were stringing the two million francs' worth of pearls that Dietrich sneaks through customs in Cooper's coat pocket.*

This elegant, capering classic was the first movie Dietrich made without her Svengali, Josef von Sternberg. In her autobiography ("Marlene"), she describes it as "the only film I need not be ashamed of" after her break with von Sternberg. Borzage put her at ease. Dietrich gains quick-witted control of her daunting erotic presence, and suggests enough genuine sentiment to make true love plausible. Cooper boasts a lean, gnarly charm. When he hems and haws, he's indicating too much sex drive, not too little. "Desire" has a lovely balance. When the action leaves the road, the filmmakers keep it lively with an amorous song and magic tricks and a graceful segue into melodrama. Supporting players such as Ernest Cossart and Alan Mowbray add to the fun. In this de-luxe, cosmopolitan lark, even the comic foils are gilt-edged.

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and not all the script's variations are fresh. But this is easily the zippiest Disney cartoon feature in the thirty years since "101 Dalmatians." Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise directed the screenplay by Linda Woolverton.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, Cinema I, and Guild. . . . ¶ Murray Hill Cinemas, and 86th Street East Twin; through April 9.)

La Bête Humaine (1938)—Jean Renoir's version of the Zola novel, transferred from the Second Empire to the thirties, has a memorable beginning, with Jean Gabin driving the express on the run from Le Havre to Paris. The train sequences, which are superb—realistic yet poetic—were shot on location and include views of the Gare St. Lazare in Paris in 1938. The film has marvellous atmosphere and a fine cast (Simone Simon, Carette, Fernand Ledoux, Blanchette Brunoy, Renoir himself), but the material, which involves brutal, uncontrollable passion seen in a social framework, turns oppressive, and at times Gabin is a lump. In French.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; April 13.)

Bugsy—This opulent period gangster movie, written by James Toback and directed by Barry Levinson, is largely a showcase for the

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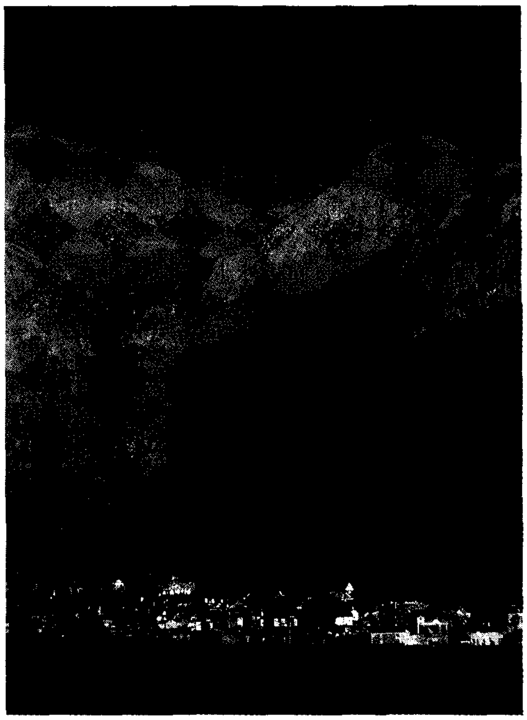

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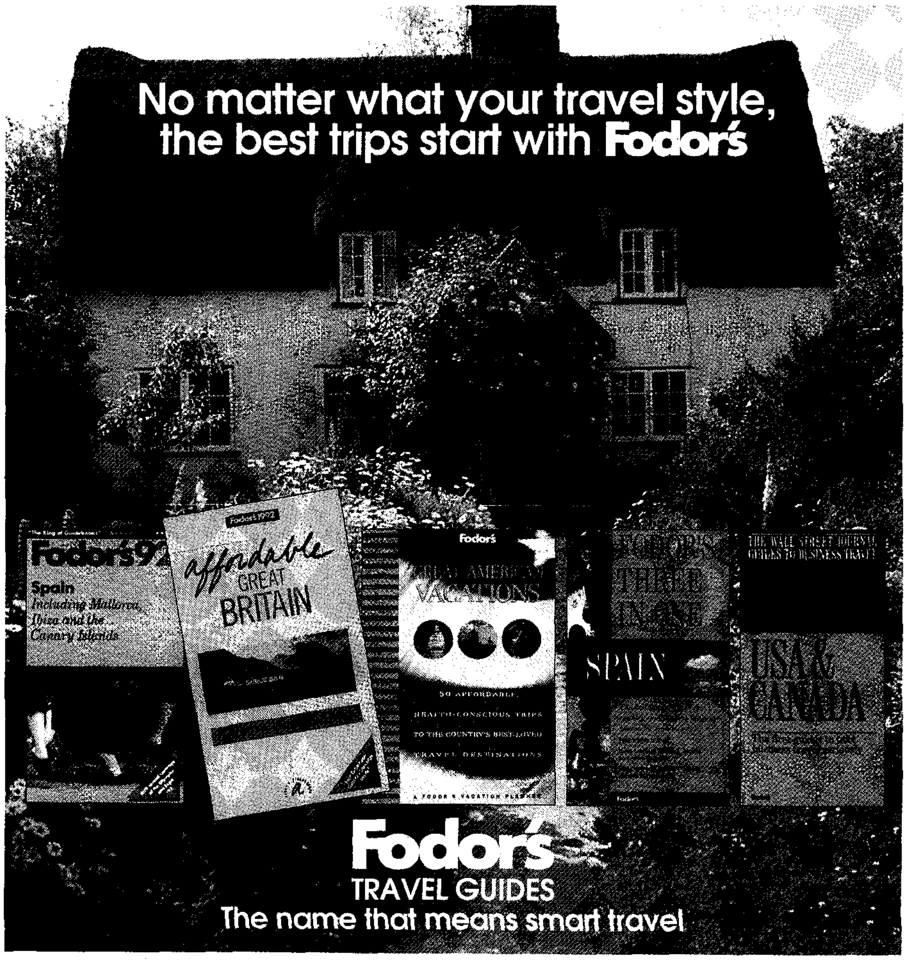
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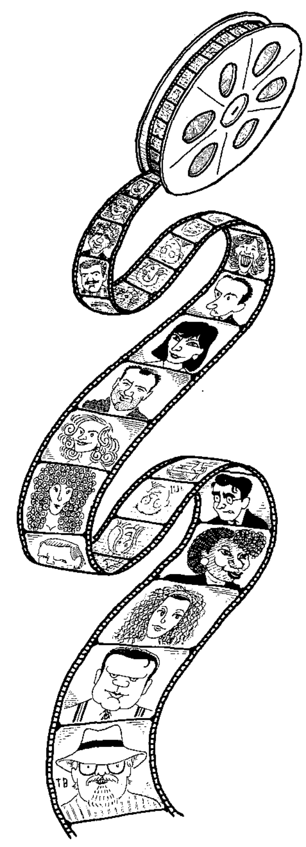
old-fashioned star magnetism of Warren Beatty, who plays the legendary Benjamin (Bugsy) Siegel. The screenplay portrays Bugsy as a charming, mercurial psychopath with a rather touching taste for glamour; it concentrates on the last few years of the hero's life, when he became a Hollywood celebrity and built the first hotel-casino in Las Vegas. He's a vivid, unpredictable, one-of-a-kind guy, and the filmmakers seem to realize that they can't take their eyes off him for a second. Siegel is a fascinating monster; we don't want to take our eyes off him, either. This is a rich role for Beatty, and he tears into it hungrily. It's the best kind of star performance: Beatty seems entirely himself, but in a new way. He's ferociously, mesmerizingly funny. Annette Bening plays Bugsy's lover, the tough, wily, independent-minded mob courtesan Virginia Hill, and she more than holds her own in her scenes with the star. And the movie is filled with pungent, memorable supporting performances. Ben Kingsley brings a surprisingly dry, elegant sense of comic timing to his portrait of sober Meyer Lansky (one of the hero's partners in the New York mob). Harvey Keitel, as Mickey Cohen, Bugsy's right-hand man in Los Angeles, spits out his profane lines as if they were live firecrackers. Elliott Gould plays the tiny role of Harry Greenberg, an aging, flabby mob schlemiel, and he's absolutely inspired; he plays this dazed character as a Willy Loman who has wandered too far from the old territory. Despite its lavish surface, this is essentially a movie of small, lovingly crafted pleasures. It's smart, swanky fun.—T.R. (12/30/91) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Eastside Cinema, and Embassy.)



At the Beekman and the Chelsea Cinemas, "The Player"

Casablanca *(1942)*—Ingrid Bergman became a popular favorite when Humphrey Bogart, as Rick, the most famous saloonkeeper in screen history, treated her like a whore. Although their romance was certified by a collection of Academy Awards, they didn't press their luck and never appeared together again. In the role of the cynic redeemed by love, Bogart became the great adventurer-lover of the screen during the war years. In this film he established the figure of the rebellious hero—the lone wolf who hates and defies officialdom (and in the movies he fullfilled a universal fantasy: he got away with it). Questioned about his purpose and motives, he informs the police: "I came to Casablanca for the waters." "Waters? What waters? We're in the desert." "I was misinformed." It's far from a great film, but it has a special appealingly schlocky romanticism, and you're never really pressed to take its melodramatic twists and turns seriously. The international cast includes Paul Henreid, Conrad Veidt, Sydney Greenstreet, Claude Rains, Peter Lorre, Marcel Dalio, Helmut Dantine, S. Z. Sakall, Joy Page, Leonid Kinskey, Curt Bois, Dan Seymour Ludwig Stossel, Ilka Gruning, Frank Puglia, Madeleine Lebeau, John Qualen, and, memorably, Dooley Wilson singing "As Time Goes By." Academy Awards: Best Picture; Director (Michael Curtiz); screenplay (Julius J. and Philip G. Epstein and Howard Koch). Based on the play "Everybody Comes to Rick's," by Murray Burnett and Joan Alison.—P.K. (Loews Festival, and Film Forum 2; starting April 10.)

A Foreign Affair (1948)—This deliberately cynical political farce by the team of Charles Brackett (producer) and Billy Wilder (director) often seems on the verge of being funny, but the humor is too clumsily forced. (The next picture Brackett and Wilder made was "Sunset Boulevard"; the jump was enormous.) As Phoebe Frost, a spinster congresswoman from Iowa investigating the morale of the American forces in Occupied Berlin, Jean Arthur looks far from her best; she hasn't much to do but act primly shocked by corruption, and then, turning womanly, get into a glittering evening gown, put a flower in her hair, and go after an Army captain—lacklustre John Lund. It's a formula that suited her better some years earlier, and so Marlene Dietrich, as Phoebe's rival—worldly-wise Erika von Schlutow, former mistress of a high-ranking Nazi and now a singer in a cellar called the Lorelei—comes off rather better, though her songs (by Frederick Hollander) are not memorable. With Millard Mitchell, and, in a bit part, Freddie Steele. Written by Brackett, Wilder, Richard Breen, and Robert Harari.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; April 14.)

Fried Green Tomatoes—Cancer, wife-beating, burning crosses, barbecue, fat-lady jokes at the expense of Kathy Bates, wisdom dispensed by Jessica Tandy, and female bonding that stops just shy of lesbianism. That's the recipe for this clunky, fraudulent, yet apparently crowd-pleasing laugh- and tearjerker. In the framing story, Tandy befriends Bates and inspires her with the Depression-era tale of tomboy Idgie (Mary Stuart Masterson) and pretty, demure Ruth (Mary-Louise Parker), who discover happiness when they found the Whistle Stop Café in Idgie's small Alabama home town. The director, Jon Avnet, drenches the palate with sweet sauce, then goes for the throat. The only good white males are run over by a train; in this feminist wish fulfillment, it isn't only tomatoes that get sliced. Written by Fannie Flagg (who has a bit role) and Carol Sobieski from Flagg's novel "Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Café."—M.S. (Baronet, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, and Regency.)

Gallipoli (1981)—An exemplary academic film about the waste of war—two young Australian runners, played by (dark-haired) Mel Gibson and (blond) Mark Lee, are slaughtered. (They and other Australians are sacrificed in an ill-conceived First World War maneuver designed to protect the British.) It's an "artistic" film, full of familiar pathos and irony—a tragic buddy-buddy movie directed by Peter Weir. His wide-screen staging is very elegant; his weakness is in his habit of stereotyping villains (in this case they're mostly the British). There's also a larger weakness; there's no discernible reason for him to have made the picture except to bring off a "classic." Gibson gives a fresh and impressive performance, but Lee does a very ordinary acting job and his character is much too gallant and good and brave. With Bill Kerr, a fine, bald-headed actor with a great voice, as Uncle Jack, who reads aloud to the children. The script is by David Williamson; the cinematography is by Russell Boyd.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; April 12.)

Hear My Song—In this small-scale comedy, Peter Chelsom, a first-time director, takes a whimsical conceit and sells it so hard that it loses most of its fragile charm. Micky O'Neill (played by Adrian Dunbar, who co-wrote the screenplay with Chelsom) manages a Liverpool music hall that caters to the local Irish community; the movie is about his attempt to find a legendary Irish tenor named Josef Locke, who hasn't been heard from in thirty years. Micky goes to Ireland to persuade Locke to return to England for a concert; on the home soil, the hero finds himself in a realm of ancient eccentricity and unearthly light, and the movie finds itself in Bill Forsyth territory. Chelsom tries, too strenuously, to evoke the enchanted comic tone of "Local Hero," and Dunbar seems to punctuate every gag with a roguish smile (often shooting one of these twinklers, unconscionably, over his shoulder). The relentless quirkiness is annoying, but the story is, on its own terms, well constructed, and the filmmakers take their fey, sentimental humor right to the limit: you can't say that they don't have the courage of their elfinness. And when Ned Beatty, who plays Locke, is on the screen the picture is nearly as transporting as it's intended to be. His performance is large-spirited comic acting: a pure specimen of Celtic soulfulness, the magical substance that everyone else in the movie has been trying to produce synthetically. Also with Shirley Anne Field.—T.R. (3/9/92) (Village East Cinemas, and Cinema 3rd Avenue.)

JFK—Oliver Stone's movie means to demonstrate that the assassination of John F. Kennedy was not the act of a disturbed Marxist loner named Lee Harvey Oswald but the result of a vast, complex right-wing conspiracy. The screenplay, by Stone and Zachary Sklar, packs an extraordinary amount of assassination lore into three hours and eight minutes; it also includes a ton of speculative material about governmental misconduct, and quite a few invented characters. The movie is a thick gumbo of truths, half-truths, unverifiable hypotheses, and pure rant, and Stone ladles it out indiscriminately. In essence, the conspiracy theory argued here amounts to a series of inferential leaps proceeding from a speculation (that J.F.K. was killed because he wanted to pull out of Vietnam and end the Cold War). It's all bombast and misdirection, like a courtroom summation by a lawyer who knows that he can't win on the evidence. Stone comes on like a fearless radical, but his attitude toward the audience is firmly in the Hollywood tradition: he tries to bypass the intellect and go straight for the gut. The picture plays like an endless episode of "America's Most Wanted." Its hysterical manner and its slipshod handling of the facts actually have the effect of diminishing the credibility of the case for conspiracy. The clearest sounds we hear in this movie are those of Oliver Stone shooting himself in the foot. With Kevin Costner as New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison, Sissy Spacek as his wife, Gary Oldman as Oswald, and an all-star cast of witnesses and conspirators: Tommy Lee Jones, Joe Pesci (an abominable performance), Donald Sutherland, Kevin Bacon, Jack Lemmon, Ed Asner, John Candy, Walter Matthau. Garrison himself does a brief turn as Chief Justice Warren.—T.R. (1/13/92) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Gemini, and Worldwide Cinemas. . . . ¶ Loews Festival; through April 9.)

The Mambo Kings—Oscar Hijuelos' overlong yet likable novel "The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love," about two Cuban musician brothers who emigrate to New York and land a guest spot on "I Love Lucy," should be prime fodder for the movies. But in the hands of the first-time director Arne Glimcher it becomes the worst sort of varnished kitsch. Glimcher and his screenwriter, Cynthia Cidre, ransack old movies for corner-cutting devices and use them to jack up Hijuelos' nostalgic evocations of the fifties. The result is overpoweringly ersatz—"The Cotton Club" with a Cuban accent. Armand Assante is the fiery brother, Antonio Banderas the sensitive one, Maruschka Detmers a book-reading beauty, and Cathy Moriarty a slangy, sexy cigarette gal. They're all encouraged to be icons; only the engagingly salty and good-humored Moriarty breaks her assigned mold. With Roscoe Lee Browne as a gangster, and cameos by Celia Cruz (as a small-club owner) and Tito Puente (as himself). Michael Ballhaus provided the gaudy, inexpressive cinematography and Stuart Wurtzel the lavish production design.—M.S. (Loews Village Theatre VII, Loews New York Twin, Loews Orpheum VII, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

Noises Off—Michael Frayn's sparkling stage hit gets framed, in more ways than one. The director, Peter Bogdanovich, and the screenwriter, Marty Kaplan, slap on a flashback structure, as well as a narration spoken by the director of Frayn's farce-within-a-farce (Michael Caine). The filmmakers transfer the rickety touring troupe from England to America, and view a catastrophic road trip as a prelude to success on Broadway. In effect, they transform Frayn's black slapstick about entropy into a "let's put on a show" fantasy about an improbable victory. Most of the time, Bogdanovich simply shoots Frayn's gleefully proscenium-bound play without making it work for the movies. The result is roughly equivalent to the "pan and scan" TV version of a wide-screen spectacle. Bogdanovich has cast actors you want to see—notably Carol Burnett, Denholm Elliott, Marilu Henner, Julie Hagerty, and Christopher Reeve—in a production that grows increasingly impossible to watch.—M.S. (4/6/92) (Village East Cinemas, and Embassy; through April 9.)

The Red Balloon (1956)—Albert Lamorisse's celebrated thirty-four-minute film without dialogue, about a small boy (his son, Pascal) who wanders all over Paris trailed by a balloon. It's an allegory of innocence and evil, set in a child's dream world. Elegantly photographed and with a durable appeal to children, though it lacks the passionate beauty of the director's other film on the same theme, "White Mane." Lamorisse wrote and directed. Also with Sabine Lamorisse.—P.K. (Anthology Film Archives; April 11.)

Shadows and Fog—Woody Allen sets his latest art-cum-comedy thing in a nameless country that resembles the Germany of movies by Pabst, Murnau, and Fritz Lang. As an irritating nebbish named Kleinman, who gets caught up in a search for a mad killer, he anchors a farrago of generic art-house themes and personalities. Such familiar figures as a messed-up clown (John Malkovich) and a hyper-rational man of science (Donald Pleasence) either suffer the torments of love or try to find the root of evil. Carlo Di Palma's ludicrously deliberate and grainy black-and-white cinematography obscures the first-rate, ill-used cast, though Mia Farrow, as a circus sword-swallower, is so splendorously creamy that she gleams through the murk. John Cusack brings an affecting, lightly parodistic ardor to the role of a romantic, prematurely world-weary student—the kind of character who could have thought up this cockeyed pessimist of a movie. Julie Kavner plays a woman who's never forgiven Kleinman for jilting her at the altar; she wins the heartiest audience response, possibly because she keeps telling him to buzz off and die. With glimpses of Lily Tomlin, Jodie Foster, Kathy Bates, Fred Gwynne, Madonna, David Ogden Stiers, and many others, including a barely discernible Kate Nelligan.—M.S. (4/6/92) (Loews Village Theatre VII, Loews Tower East, and Loews Columbus Circle.)

This Is My Life—The first film directed by the novelist and screenwriter Nora Ephron is a modest, uninsistent family comedy about a single mom from Queens who becomes a famous standup comic and, in the process, strains her relationship with her two young daughters. The movie is consistently good-humored without ever being really funny; the scenes float by on a lulling current of amiability and mild perkiness, and nothing surprising or incongruous bobs up. The picture's wispy, genial not-badness is a little puzzling, because both the material and the cast are strong enough to support a much sturdier and more satisfying piece of entertainment. The script, by the director and her sister Delia, drastically compresses a good 1988 novel (called "This Is Your Life") by Meg Wolitzer; the story emerges from the screenwriters' rapid-weight-loss clinic dazed, unused to its new lightness. The heroine is played by the wonderful, raspy-voiced Julie Kavner, and Samantha Mathis and Gaby Hoffmann, the young actresses who play her daughters, are lively and skillful; none of the performers leave a memorable impression, though. Ephron doesn't go for big vulgar laughs or big vulgar emotions. Most of the time, it's hard to tell exactly what she is going for: the discreet, temperate tone doesn't betray any sense of urgency or purpose. The movie's lack of drive is frustrating, and its well-manneredness is oddly out of keeping with the subject matter. The picture doesn't have the steel or the shamelessness that good comedians need. It's all buildup and no payoff—a shaggy-dog story, not a killer routine. Also with Dan Aykroyd and Carrie Fisher. The hideous score is by Carly Simon.—T.R. (3/9/92) (First & 62nd Cinemas, and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

To Kill a Mockingbird (1962)—When Gregory Peck got the Academy Award for Best Actor for his performance as an upstanding widowed lawyer practicing in a small Alabama town in the early thirties, there was a fair amount of derision throughout the country: Peck was better than usual, but in that same virtuously dull way. (There was a suspicion that Peck was being rewarded because the Lincolnesque lawyer shot a rabid dog and defended an innocent black man accused of raping a white woman.) Robert Mulligan directed, from Horton Foote's adaptation of Harper Lee's Pulitzer Prize novel, and it's all terribly conscientious—the clapboard houses, the slatted porch swings on rusty chains, the Chevy phaetons on dusty streets, the high moral sentiments, the specs on Peck's nose. Mulligan slows the pace down when he wants to suggest the mysteries of childhood or to arouse warm emotions; this works only intermittently. The movie is part eerie Southern gothic and part Hollywood self-congratulation for its enlightened racial attitudes. Brock Peters, who flares his nostrils mightily, is the black man on trial, and Robert Duvall is the brain-damaged Boo Radley, of whom the lawyer's children (Mary Badham and Philip Alford) are terrified.—P.K. (Walter Reade Theatre; April 11-13.)

Wayne's World—"Saturday Night Live" has become a repackaging industry. The extended antics of vidiot savants Wayne Campbell (Mike Myers) and Garth Algar (Dana Carvey) betray the same slapped-together quality as the TV specials "Toonces, the Cat Who Could Drive a Car" and "Saturday Night Live Goes Commercial," though the film is not as entertaining. Seen in five-minute spurts on "S.N.L.," beaming out their cable-access program from Wayne's basement, these two come off as cracked bellwethers of the Next Big Things of suburban youth culture, Hard Rock Division. (Their pre-"Truth or Dare" show with Madonna was a classic.) In the movie, Myers still boasts his inexplicably confident and cheery expressions—he's a mischievous smile button. But Carvey overworks his twisted mouth. Wayne and Garth weren't meant to be frozen on celluloid the way they are in this parody of coöptation, which casts them as victims of a manipulative commercial-TV promoter (Rob Lowe). Here they function as leaders of a nostalgia-fest for audiences with short attention spans, paying homage to, yes, "Terminator 2" as well as syndicated TV favorites like "Laverne and Shirley" and "Mission: Impossible." (Sadly, the Tooncinator fails to make a guest appearance.) Carvey has one good bit, playing out a murder with some frosted crullers, and the ever-game Lowe musters up a funny walk after a cop gives him a heavy frisk. Penelope Spheeris directed, from a script by Myers, Bonnie Turner, and Terry Turner.—M.S. (Loews Village Theatre VII, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews New York Twin, Loews Orpheum VII, 23rd St. West Triplex, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy.)

White Men Can't Jump—A resourceful, sneaky-fast comedy about playground basketball. Ron Shelton, the writer and director, focusses on grown men trying to make a living at a boy's game, and he does full justice to the sweet absurdity of that enterprise. He keeps his eye on the fine points of playground culture and lets the story's meaning—and its humor—emerge from the details. The heroes, Sidney (Wesley Snipes) and Billy (Woody Harrelson), are addicted to the game. As a two-man team, they venture into the tough, hostile inner-city neighborhoods of Los Angeles and try to hustle the kings of the local courts. It's a great con: everyone assumes that Billy can't play the speedy, shake-and-bake style of black playground ball. Shelton and his crew (which includes cinematographer Russell Boyd and the editor Paul Seydor) have put together basketball sequences that capture the free-flowing rhythms of the game. The two-on-two contests here give us the delicious feeling a player gets when he's *almost* out of control: flying but lucid. Harrelson's performance is rich, subtle, and delicately funny. And Snipes is just amazing: everything he does seems to leap off the screen. Shelton orchestrates the narrative like a veteran point guard: he's a wily pro with a streak of playground showmanship, and that's an ideal style for movies as well as for basketball. The picture has a generous spirit and a deep appreciation of play, and it moves with a distinctive funky grace: it takes things as they come and trusts itself to handle them. Also with Rosie Perez, Tyra Ferrell, Kadeem Hardison, and Marques Johnson. The terrific soundtrack features music by Aretha Franklin, Jimi Hendrix, James Brown, and Ray Charles.—T.R. (4/6/92) (Manhattan Twin, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, 23rd St. West Triplex, Olympia, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Bay Cinema; through April 9.)

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THE NEW YORKER

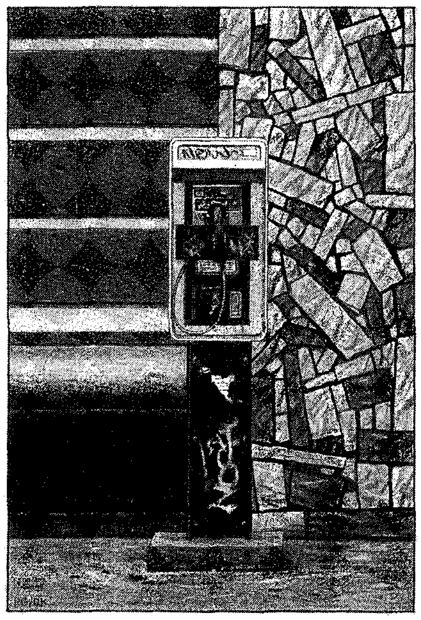
THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

TRADITIONALLY, vast prison systems have adorned tyrannies. Revolutions, of course, have spawned gulags of their own, but the great democratic upheavals around the globe during the past two or three years have, to their credit, not done so. In the former Soviet Union, in Eastern Europe, even in South Africa—where democracy got a boost last month when two-thirds of the country's white voters endorsed negotiations leading to a new constitution—incarceration rates have declined sharply following profound political change. For a startling number of people, the expansion of liberty in these lands seems to have been a matter of actual prison doors swinging open. To some, it has meant the difference between life and death: the South African government announced two weeks ago that, as a concession to its negotiating partners, it was suspending executions indefinitely.

Here in the United States, meanwhile, executions are taking place at a constantly increasing pace, and a recent report by a Washington group called the Sentencing Project shows that, with more than a million people now imprisoned, we have become the unchallenged world leader in incarceration rates. We passed South Africa and the Soviet Union, the previous leaders, sometime in the nineteen-eighties—a decade during which the number of inmates in the United States doubled—and we are now so far ahead of every other nation that in this category, at least, we can rest assured of remaining No. 1 for many years. It is as if the City Upon a Hill, once envisioned by the Puritans as a shining beacon to the rest of the world, had sprouted guard towers and razor wire. In an era of crippling deficits, we are spending more than twenty billion dollars a year to lock people up. Moreover, this figure is expected to continue to rise swiftly; prison officials estimate that by 1995 the number of inmates will increase by another thirty per cent—by another three hundred and thirty thousand prisoners.

The primary cause of the dizzying increase in our prison population has been our government's ill-named "war on drugs." In 1980, according to the Sentencing Project, there were four hundred and seventy-one thousand drug arrests nationwide; in 1989, there were a million two hundred and forty-seven thousand. Over half the inmates in the federal prison system today are drug offenders; the figure is expected to be nearly seventy per cent by 1995. The practice known as mandatory sentencing is largely responsible for this lopsided prison population. Congress has passed sixty mandatory-sentencing statutes: four of them have accounted for ninety-four per cent of the mandatory sentences imposed; and over ninety per cent of those sentences have been imposed for drug offenses. Under the doctrine of mandatory sentencing, which sets heavy minimum prison sentences except in cases where those convicted provide useful information to the authorities, nonviolent first offenders often end up serving more time than prisoners with long criminal records, who typically have more information to trade. In addition, violent offenders gain early release from overcrowded prisons to make room for those sentenced to mandatory minimums. The average sentence served for murder today is six and a half years; for possession of seven hundred marijuana plants the federal mandatory minimum is eight years, with no possibility of parole.

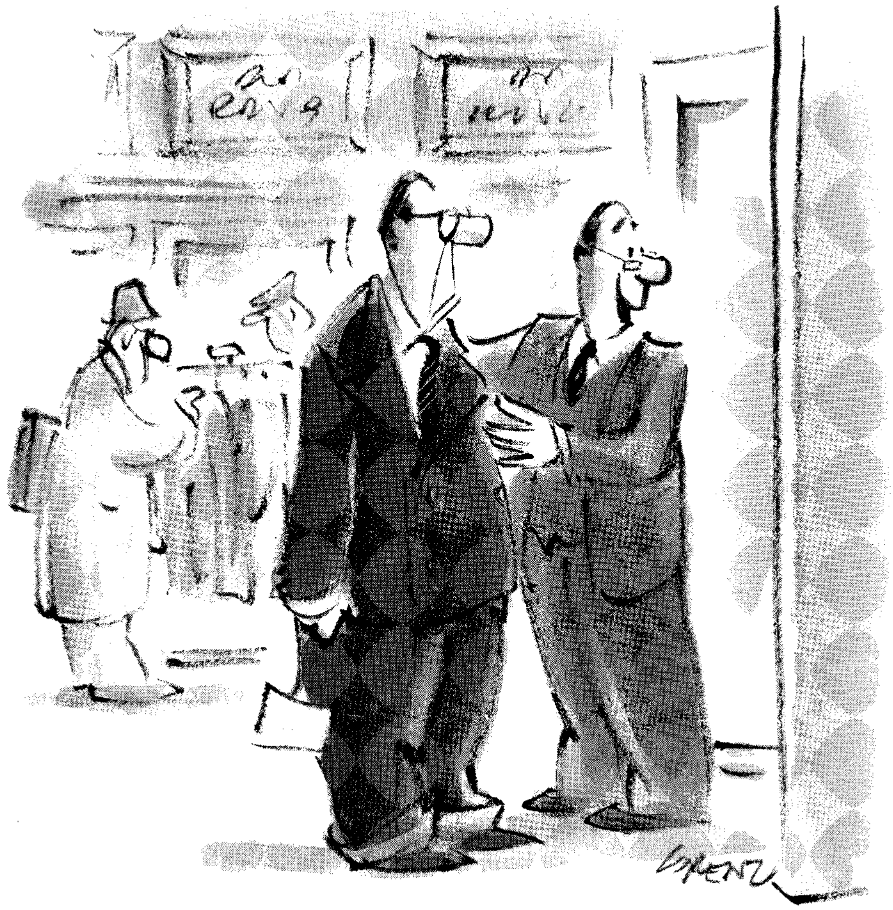


Mandatory minimum sentences are opposed by the twelve Federal Judicial Conferences and by many major national legal organizations, including the American Bar Association, the United States Sentencing Commission, and the Federal Courts Study Committee. And yet Congress has declined to repeal a single mandatory-sentencing law. On the contrary, legislators constantly propose more such laws, and the Bush Administration also subscribes to this approach. In January, Attorney General William Barr told a meeting of California district attorneys, "The choice is clear. More prison space or more crime." But the truth is that increased incarceration rates have been found to have only a negligible effect on crime rates. Recognizing this fact, the Conservative Government in Great Britain last year adopted new sentencing laws whose aim is to reduce that country's prison population by as much as fifty per cent by 1995.

One waits in vain for the current

Presidential-campaign debate to take up the question of seemingly endless prison expansion. It is as if the institutional momentum and the presumed popularity of our government's war on drugs had made that war impervious to rational policy argument. The Drug Enforcement Administration, seeking to justify its own exorbitant growth by increasing its arrest totals, runs sting operations designed to lure amateur chemists into producing illegal drugs. Federal agents, aware that mandatory sentences skyrocket when drug sales take place within a thousand feet of a school, arrange drug deals near schools. And many state and local officials, taking their cues from the federal authorities, are also enthusiastic drug warriors, particularly since the passage, beginning in 1978, of federal laws that make seizure of the assets of accused drug traffickers a highly profitable enterprise. Some state mandatory sentences are truly breathtaking; in Michigan, for instance, conviction for possession of less than a pound and a half of cocaine results, even for a nonviolent first offender, in a mandatory sentence of life without parole. So it's hardly surprising that state prisons are jammed to the rafters with drug offenders. In Florida, prison admissions for drug crimes rose by more than eighteen hundred per cent between 1980 and 1989. Here in New York, the number of drug offenders in state prisons rose by seven hundred per cent during the same period, with ninety per cent of those convicted in recent years serving mandatory sentences.

What kind of society are we hoping to create by this policy of wholesale incarceration? What will these millions of people, most of them unskilled, uneducated, and brutalized by imprisonment, be prepared to do when they emerge after ten or fifteen or twenty years? There is no evidence that the government's war on drugs is reducing drug use or drug trafficking in the poor black communities where both activities are so concentrated. And there *is* evidence that alternatives to imprisonment—"intermediate sanctions," which include fines, sentences to community service, and various levels of probation and restriction—are at least as effective as imprisonment in reducing crime. They are also far cheaper. But is reducing crime in fact our current policy's goal? Or is the goal simply to placate, however cynically, the public's anger and fear? Crime rates have increased lately in South Africa, Eastern Europe, and the former Soviet Union, yet prison expansion has not been part of the official response in any of those places. Perhaps that is because they are societies with fresh memories of how little prisons really accomplish.



"Like so much this spring, this is slightly mob-inflected."

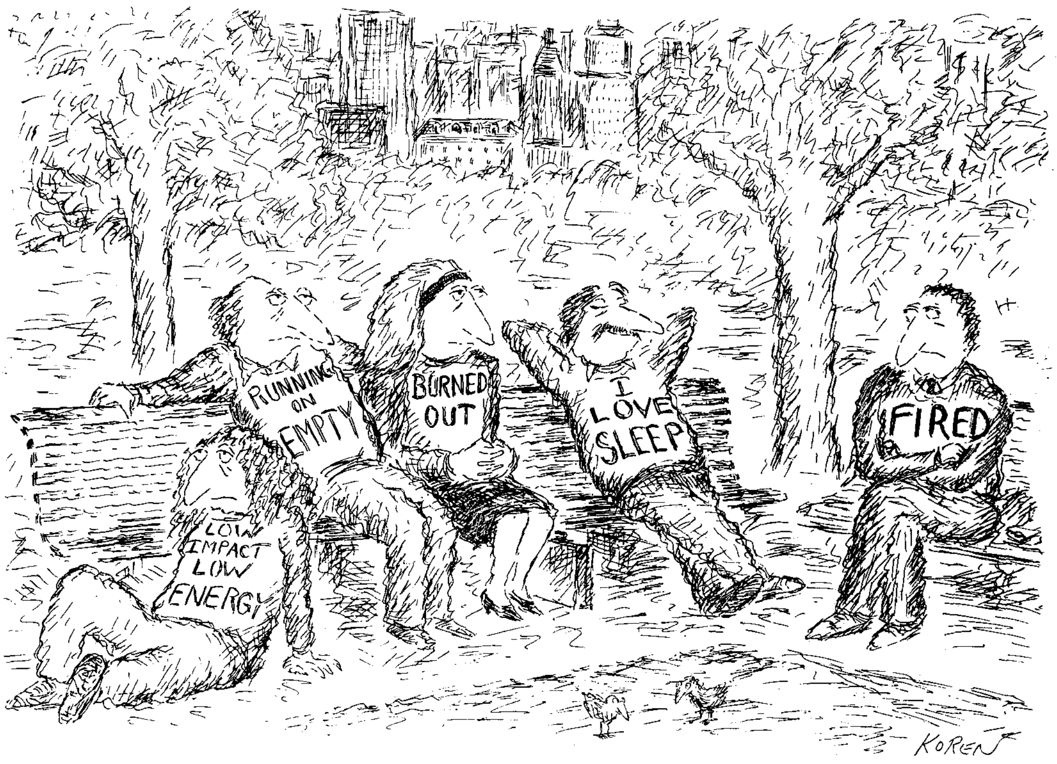
• •

Walt

A New Yorker we know writes:

A hundred years ago last week, at the age of seventy-three, happy and in unspeakable pain from spreading tubercular infections that had dissolved his organs and bones, Walt Whitman died, bequeathing us his "Leaves of Grass." By now, we have begun to understand what a miraculous gift it was. "Leaves of Grass" will always be with us, like a heartbeat. Walt Whitman was and is our national poet—a better poet than we ever deserved or could have hoped for. I see him at a younger age, in his late thirties. He is a homosexual building contractor and unemployed journalist, living with his mother in Brooklyn. He is six feet tall, weighs a hundred and eighty pounds, and has a mottled-gray beard and a thatch of prematurely whitening hair, which he likes to compare to hay. He has large freckles on his face. His eyes are a semitransparent, indistinct light blue, and they have sharp, velvety-black pupils—eyes that like to search the faces of young men on Broadway, hoping to meet the shock of love. He walks slowly around Manhattan all day, or he rides the ferry across the East River, and he keeps his hands in his pockets, now and then extracting one hand and raising it high in the air to greet his friends, who are mostly stage drivers and roustabouts. His clothes are very clean. He wears a white shirt, open at the collar, and you can see a red undershirt against his throat, and he wears a wide-brimmed hat, and workingmen's trousers tucked into cowhide boots. Quite a lot of him is pose.

That's Walt around the summer of 1855, when he published the first edition of "Leaves of Grass." After that, he



began telling people that his life's work was the making of "pomes," as he pronounced the word. He worked on the collection and enlarged it until he died. Some of his poems were great to begin with and got worse every time he touched them, but they still landed easily on their feet. "Leaves of Grass" seemed to unfurl out of nothing when it first appeared. Walt had previously shown evidence only of negative talent—he had written a few poems that were worse than bad—but the first poem in the first edition of "Leaves of Grass" was a long, untitled, devastatingly beautiful masterpiece that is one of the bravest poems ever written and one of the central documents of the human spirit. He later gave it a title, "Song of Myself," but probably he should have left it nameless. It's very hard to describe what this poem is about, but maybe you could say it's about something you knew before and had always been waiting for. Yet there seems to be no end to the surprises in "Song of Myself." For example, on the third page the poet invites his own soul to "Loafe with me on the grass," and, astonishingly, his soul arrives, in the form of a lover, who takes off the poet's clothes and licks his body ("You settled your head athwart my hips and gently turned over upon me"). It is the kind of poem that today would have trouble getting funded by the National Endowment for the Arts. Someone gave Abraham Lincoln a copy of the first edition of "Leaves of Grass" soon after it was published, and he thought it was terrific. He left it on a table in his law office in Illinois, and liked to read aloud from it.

On the centennial evening of Walt's death, I went to the Cathedral of St. John the Divine to hear some American poets read aloud from "Leaves of Grass." I wanted to hear Walt speak through them, since it could be said that he is inside all living American poets, whether they want him there or not. The poets that night were Lucille Clifton, Allen Ginsberg, Michael Harper, Galway Kinnell, Sharon Olds, Gerald Stern, and C. K. Williams. There must have been more than a thousand people in the cathedral, and I sensed that emotion in the crowd ran high.

The poets took turns reading shorter poems from "Leaves of Grass," and the Cathedral Singers sang choral works that used Walt's texts. Then the poets tackled the long, nameless poem of 1855. Lucille Clifton (the author of seven books of poetry, including "Good Woman" and "Quilting") opened the poem in a huge voice, crying out:

> I celebrate myself,
> And what I assume you shall
>   assume,
> For every atom belonging to me as
>   good belongs to you.
>
> I loafe and invite my soul,
> I lean and loafe at my ease . . . .
>   observing a spear of summer grass.

She continued for a while, and then Sharon Olds (four books of poetry) took over. Galway Kinnell (ten books) picked up the next passage gently, and I saw that he wasn't always reading; he knew parts of it by heart. After him came C. K. Williams (seven books) and Michael Harper (nine books), and then Gerald Stern (eight books), his voice rising almost to a roar and breaking with emotion. Allen Ginsberg (sixteen books) followed, and he read smiling, his head bobbing over the text:

> Through me forbidden voices,
> Voices of sexes and lusts . . . . voices
>   veiled, I remove the veil,
> Voices indecent by me clarified and
>   transfigured.

Suddenly, a bat flew out of darkness into the chancel and circled over him. People watched the bat, distracted. Kinnell finished the poem:

> Missing me one place search another,
> I stop some where waiting for you

The audience applauded and then broke into cheers. The poets had managed to sound like Whitman, and he had managed to sound like them. Then we heard Whitman's voice itself, or a voice that is supposed to be Whitman's, recorded on wax not long before he died, reading a few lines from his poem "America." There was a lot of crackling in the recording. His voice sounded rather high-pitched, it was conversational rather than declamatory, and I thought it had a faintly English-sounding accent.

Later, I caught up with several of the poets, and asked Gerald Stern what he thought Walt might say about the evening.

"I think he would say he feels absolutely close to us tonight, and like a dear comrade," Stern said. "When I heard that recording of his voice, I turned to Allen Ginsberg and said, 'That sounds like *you*, you bastard.' "

C. K. Williams said to me, "At the end of Jerry Stern's passage, I couldn't tell if it was Whitman or Stern doing the reading."

"I didn't know if it was Whitman or me, either," Stern said.

Sharon Olds said, "I felt very close to Whitman, especially when that bat came out. Did you see that bat? It was a sort of pale-beigish bat. For me, it was both a bat and him."

"Where did 'Song of Myself' come from?" I asked.

"That's something I've been asking myself a lot lately," she said.

"It's like when you go to the eye doctor," Stern said. "Suddenly, everything focusses. That's what happened with Whitman. Everything suddenly focussed for him, and he wrote 'Song of Myself.' "

"What I wonder about is the miracle that allowed this man to sing," Olds said. "He didn't sing only as a white man or a gay man. He didn't even sing as a living man, as opposed to a dead man. He makes the human race look like a better idea."

Calumet

AND a young woman we know in Kentucky writes:

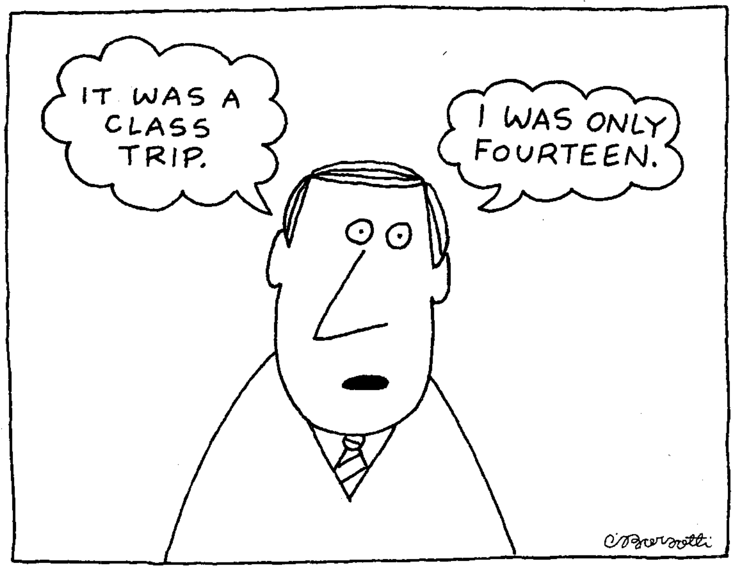
Everybody in the Bluegrass has been a little blue this spring, with the news that the world-famous Calumet Farm, Lexington's premier thoroughbred-horse farm, was bankrupt and would be auctioned off. Calumet is so much a part of our landscape and our history here that it seemed impossible that it would end, or change. But now the auction is over, and suddenly everything seems all right. It's spring in Kentucky. The forsythia bloomed long ago, and at most of the horse farms the foals are out running with their moms.

Before I go into how it all turned out, I have to tell about the peculiar sadness that surrounded the sale of Calumet. "Sad" was the word everybody used. For months, uncertainty about what would happen to Calumet had bothered us all deeply. It was sad—and scary—that such a solid, great institution should fall into financial ruin. The horse business is a tricky one, and lots of horse farms are for sale now. But Calumet was special, and everybody knew it. Calumet was the home of eight Kentucky Derby winners, including two Triple Crown winners, Whirlaway and Citation; it was the home of Alydar. When you fly into Lexington, you fly over Calumet, and you used to see the horses grazing below. Calumet is the showplace farm you drive past on the way into town from the airport. Its beauty is pristine and tasteful. There's nothing gaudy or ostentatious about it—just the lines of great sycamores and oaks, the simple white fences, the white barns daintily trimmed in red. But the prettiest thing about it is the gentle, sexy roll of the land. The white fences draw your eye over those curves in a startling way. It reminds me of a roller coaster.

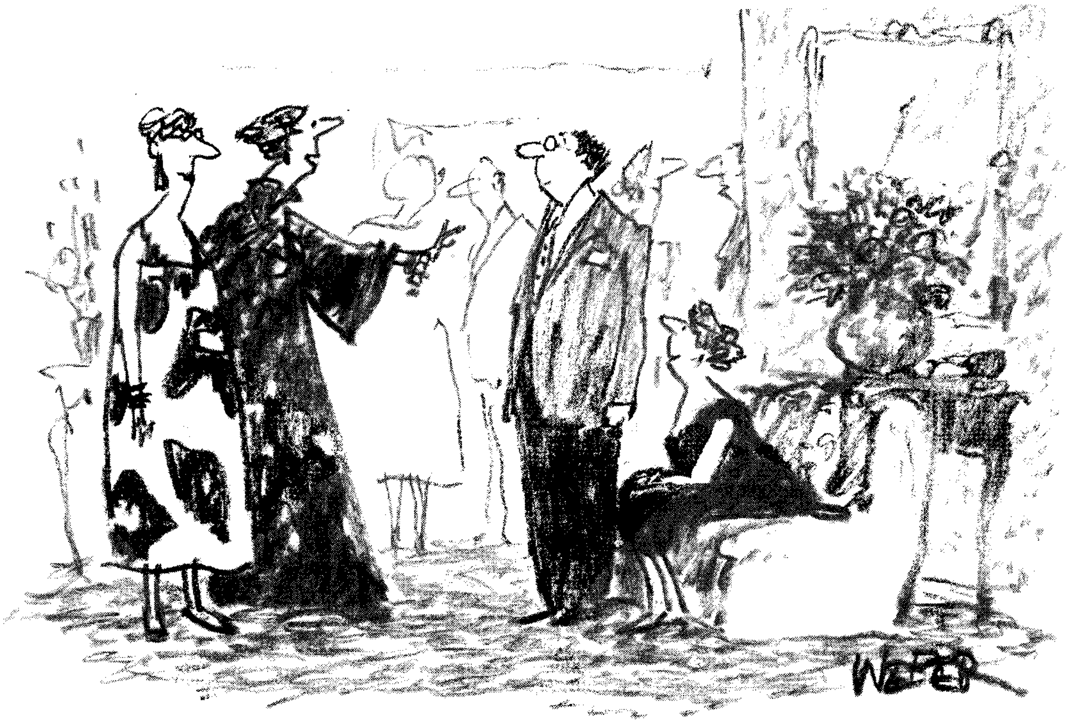
I grew up on a small dairy farm in Kentucky, and I wouldn't have known a julep cup from a teat cup on a milking machine. But once, on my twenty-first birthday, when I was a student at the University of Kentucky, in Lexington, I glimpsed the life inside one of those palaces of the horse world. My roommate and I had consecutive birthdays—mine was May 1st and hers was May 2nd—and a girl in our dorm who came from one of those fabulous horse farms decided to throw us a birthday bash at her house. Her parents were out of town. A chauffeur came to get us. I remember riding down an avenue of great trees to a white-columned mansion. Inside, an army of servants paraded around with silver trays loaded with lots of interesting delicacies we'd never eaten before, and there was plenty of Kentucky bourbon. We had nothing to compare the scene with except the movies. The party is a blur in my memory, but I can still see the silver trays, the white towels, and the black butlers. I couldn't imagine living this way. I don't remember the horses.

My twenty-first-birthday party was on my mind the other Sunday, when Calumet opened its red wrought-iron gates to the public for an auction preview. The whole town, it seemed, was there, out of curiosity. The horse barns were empty, and it was spooky to walk down the long corridors of empty stalls. The last horses had been sold in November—another wrenching day for the Bluegrass, when Calumet's hundred and twenty-five horses were walked next door to the Keeneland sales lots. As I recalled that day, I thought for a moment I could hear ghosts of horses kicking against those red-trimmed wood-panelled stalls. I'd read that Alydar, Calumet's most valuable horse, used to kick his stall temperamentally, and finally broke his leg doing that and had to be destroyed. But the sounds I heard turned out to be people exploring the hayloft. I went up there and saw some forlorn bales of hay. The hay was timothy, and it was for sale.

The Sunday crowd had come to get a close look at the stuff listed in the auction catalogue—furniture, eleven refrigerators, seven microwaves, four TVs, paintings of horses, two metal spires from Calumet buildings, an old Calumet-baking-powder box, feed bags, fleece girth covers, breeding pads, muzzles, saddles, muck


IT WAS A CLASS TRIP.
I WAS ONLY FOURTEEN.

AN OUTSIDER-PARTY CANDIDATE IS FORCED TO ADMIT THAT HE ONCE VISITED WASHINGTON, D.C.



"I'd like you two to meet Samantha Hogue. Samantha has been terribly busy trying to chase the Chinese out of Tibet."

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sacks, rub rags, blinker hoods, nose twitches, mops, brooms, feather dusters, fence boards, pitchforks, several silver chalices and loving cups, and nineteen lots of silver julep cups won by Calumet thoroughbreds. And many more items too sad to go into. In the equine hospital, you had the feeling that everything had been shut down in a hurry. You could still feel—and smell—the presence of the horses in the large, red-trimmed examining room and the X-ray room. Miscellaneous items cluttered the white counters: Heimlich chest-drain valves, Desitin diaper-rash ointment, lamb nipples, saline solution for contact lenses, and a three-pint nursing bottle. I paused over Lot No. 415: a bunch of stainless-steel water buckets labelled with the names Alydar, Secreto, Mogambo.

I felt ridiculous getting sentimental over Alydar's water bucket, so I went out and took a walk across a pasture. It was a raw, rainy day. The bluegrass was weed-choked and muddy. As a farmer's daughter, I appreciate good pasture land being taken care of and put to good use, and right then the loss of good land struck me as the most troubling thing about this whole event. In the gloom, I thought I could even see the blue in the grass. I climbed a perfect white plank fence to reach a road leading to sheds where farm machinery was being sold. At the sheds, I talked to Herschel Lathery, the grounds supervisor. He was a friendly man in a baseball cap and a blue windbreaker and rubber boots. He told me he had been with Calumet since April 10, 1948. "I don't know what I'll be doing next Monday, but I hope to stay on," he said. "It's up to him, or her—whoever buys it." Mr. Lathery had lived all those years right there by the sheds, in a cozy white cottage with red shutters and red-topped chimneys. In the front yard was a swan planter with a red streak on its head.

I imagine that Mr. Lathery is a happy man today. A few days after I visited the farm, Calumet was sold at auction, in a red-and-white striped tent holding more than two thousand people. The sale took twelve minutes of tense bidding. Almost immediately, the new owner of Calumet was introduced. He is Henryk deKwiatkowski, a Polish-born Canadian citizen, an aircraft executive in America, and a successful horseman (two Belmont Stakes winners), and he had appeared out of the blue. In one swoop, he paid cash—seventeen million dollars—and he bought the name Calumet, rehired the whole staff, and promised not to change a whisker on the place. He told the crowd he had got a lump in his stomach when he thought of that beautiful place being dismantled, so he'd flown up from the Bahamas that morning to buy it. All that was missing from this scene was the white horse. The crowd gave him a standing ovation. Later, he said he hoped to keep the farm in his family in perpetuity. (He has ten children.) He said, "The fences will be painted white for as long as I live."

Henryk deKwiatkowski (pronounced "de-fiat-cough-ski") has an aura of glamour and royalty. (He discounted rumors that he was a Polish count.) In his dark-blue suit, and with his deep tan and his crown of silver hair, he seemed to be polished and gleaming all over, like a horse trophy of some sort. Because of a polo injury, he leaned on an elegant walking stick, and he smiled like someone who had just won the lottery. He later said he would have paid twenty-five million for Calumet.

"This is a storybook ending to a sad chapter," said John Ward, the president of Calumet.

It's a good thing that Calumet's shining knight seems to have plenty of money to get the farm going again, because he is going to need a lot of stuff: pitchforks, feed bags—the works. Every movable object on the farm was sold the afternoon of the auction and the next day. But I'm sure he'll have a great time starting from scratch. I always thought it was fun to move to a new place and go out and buy new kitchen supplies. And spring is just the time for starting over. One of the first things Henryk deKwiatkowski said he would do was move some of his two hundred-odd horses into those empty pastures. I hope that means spring foals running with their moms.

MOUSETRAP

WHENEVER I visit, Mom asks me questions. "What is love?" she wants to know. "Do you believe that hearts can truly break?" In the year since her husband Stu's death, she's never stopped asking. Mom is sixty-seven, tiny, and deeply stylish. She has new MTV hair, so short it's fuzzy, dark with a whitish glaze on it. This time, I'm visiting for her neck lift—surgery to fine-tune her already startlingly youthful appearance and complement the wonderful-looking baby wolf's hair. As I travel toward Boston, the train seems to rise; I ascend into the north, finally stepping out into sheets of wintry air. Mom just moved to Union Park, in the South End, which is a little like a square in London. As usual, she's on some kind of cutting edge: all around her, the neighborhood is shifting economically—some areas drastically gentrifying, others falling into neglect.

In the foyer, pleasure drops over me; being a child again, in my mother's house, gathers me up and carries me away. Faint music is always playing in the background at Mom's. Before I get my jacket off, she is asking, "Could you put a baby up for adoption?"

My mother's old friend Hilary, from Newton, takes me aside. Hilary is a large, imposing woman, a former actress, disorientingly flashy, a wearer of cloaks and scarves. On her right index finger, she has a small jewel screwed into the point of her polished nail. She follows me into the pantry, presses me against the cabinet, and tells me about Mom. "I'd say *aren't you cute* to visit, but it's so much more. How crucial you are to Mother! Stuart was irreplaceable! Who does Mother have?"

Hilary and Mom, one big, one little, are about as glamorous as you get. Hilary is Mom's cosmetic-surgery mentor; back in her brilliant previous life, she had her entire face tightened and polished twice at least. Several times a week, she drives in from Newton and sits on the velvet couch until Mom is ready to go out. Today, after petitioning me in the pantry, she takes her place on the middle cushion, while I worry about her question.

Well, my mother has Florence, her old Labrador, and Baby Blue, her Burmese. She also has Raymond, a sort of boyfriend, eighty years old, whom she claims to hate, in a brownstone across the square. His windows and hers line up precisely. Several times a day, Mom looks carefully out her living-room window, from her house into his, to be sure he hasn't fallen unconscious.

Hilary says, "Ray and Mother are like Beauvoir and Sartre."

"Snooze on," Mom says. She leaves the room and immediately returns. This is an old habit of hers, departing the conversation for a moment; if you wait a couple of beats, she comes back. She is wearing a tiny Chanel suit and carrying a crystal atomizer, which she sprays about her throat. She says, "Raymond—it takes a lot of applause to keep *that* Tinker Bell in the air."

Hilary shrieks and falls on her side into the pillows. "She is so adorable! She is a cute adorable little minx, your mother! What a troublemaker!"

Mom's face gets pink. She says, "If you think this codger is a boyfriend of mine, Hilary, you are losing it. You are *lost in the wild*."

MOM and Hilary try to decide where to eat. "Hilary wants it cheap," Mom tells me privately. And to Hilary: "I won't go to the Italian place. Last week the lettuce tasted like a rubber raft."

We agree on the Palestinian restaurant, where Hilary discovers a fly on its back in the Arabian salad, kicking its little legs. "Oh stop the fuss, Hil," my mother says, and flicks it onto the floor.

I get up and go off to the bathroom. When I come back they are talking about medical matters, and Mom is curled over the table, impersonating a friend with a back problem. Under her miniature Chanel suit, she's got her spine bent like a twig. The friend needs surgery on a disk and has consulted two doctors, one empathic, the other brusque.

"It sounds like a good-cop-bad-cop routine," Hilary says.

"It's not that he's such a good cop!" my mother cries, sitting up and shoving at the pita basket. "But he's *sentient*. Unlike this Thanksgiving turkey she's employed to be her surgeon!"

Inevitably, over the honeyed pastry, we talk about Raymond—talking about him, my mother points out, is an index of our exaggerated collective longing for men. "Are we *so desperate* that the discussion has to be continuous?" I tell her she's right—it does, because we are. Actually, for some months I've been seeing Steven, a handsome, steadily pleasant lawyer, who acts as if, out of reserves of good will toward humankind, he's letting me date him. My kids don't like him, and they can't say why. They dislike him the way a dog might.

"I envy you, Lolly," says Hilary. "You know I am no groupie for Ray. You're right he's a sob sister. But face it, dear, at times he can be a nice surprise—perceptive and acute."

Mom says sweetly, "Doddering, and arch, and blind."

"Blind?"

"Literally, no. Figuratively, almost completely," she tells us. She waves wildly at the restaurateurs, who are clustered in the back on the phone, and one of them rushes forward, looking at her with what appears to be love. When Raymond dies, as he certainly will before Mom, she will say that he was the sharpest, warmest, most intelligent old man she ever knew. She will lay his hankie in her underwear drawer, folded like a little flag.

Earlier today, before we came out to lunch, Ray dropped by and said, apropos of nothing, "I would just wonder what your mother—all you girls—think about this fellow Jackson."

Mom looked suspicious. "Why do you use the term 'fellow'?" She flushed and her eyes grew bright with unshed tears of rage about racism.

"Oh, Lolly," Hilary said. "Go right on, Ray. And please continue to call *me* a girl whenever you see fit."

Raymond said genially, "Lolly, you're full of soup." My mother spun around and looked at me and crossed her eyes as if she were being garrotted.

MY sister, Rhoda, and her husband are also in Boston—Rhody's teaching printmaking and drawing this semester. They visit one night, and Hilary sits in the club chair looking interested, wearing a jumpsuit and silk dancing pumps. Tom, Rhody's husband, is telling Mother stories. His mother once took him to a rodeo, claimed her dress had faded, and dragged him home by the leg, screaming *I'll never take you to an outdoor event again.*

We moan and laugh. Mom goes to the kitchen and comes right back.

Tom says, "My mother equated inconvenience with death."

Rhody grins at Mom, who cuts her dead.

Tom says, "While I was at school, she gave my dog away. This was during Korea. She said, 'Y'know, our President came on the radio and asked us to contribute to the war effort, so I gave Captain to the Defense Department.' I remember thinking, Well, maybe he'll be an asset. After all, he's a biter."

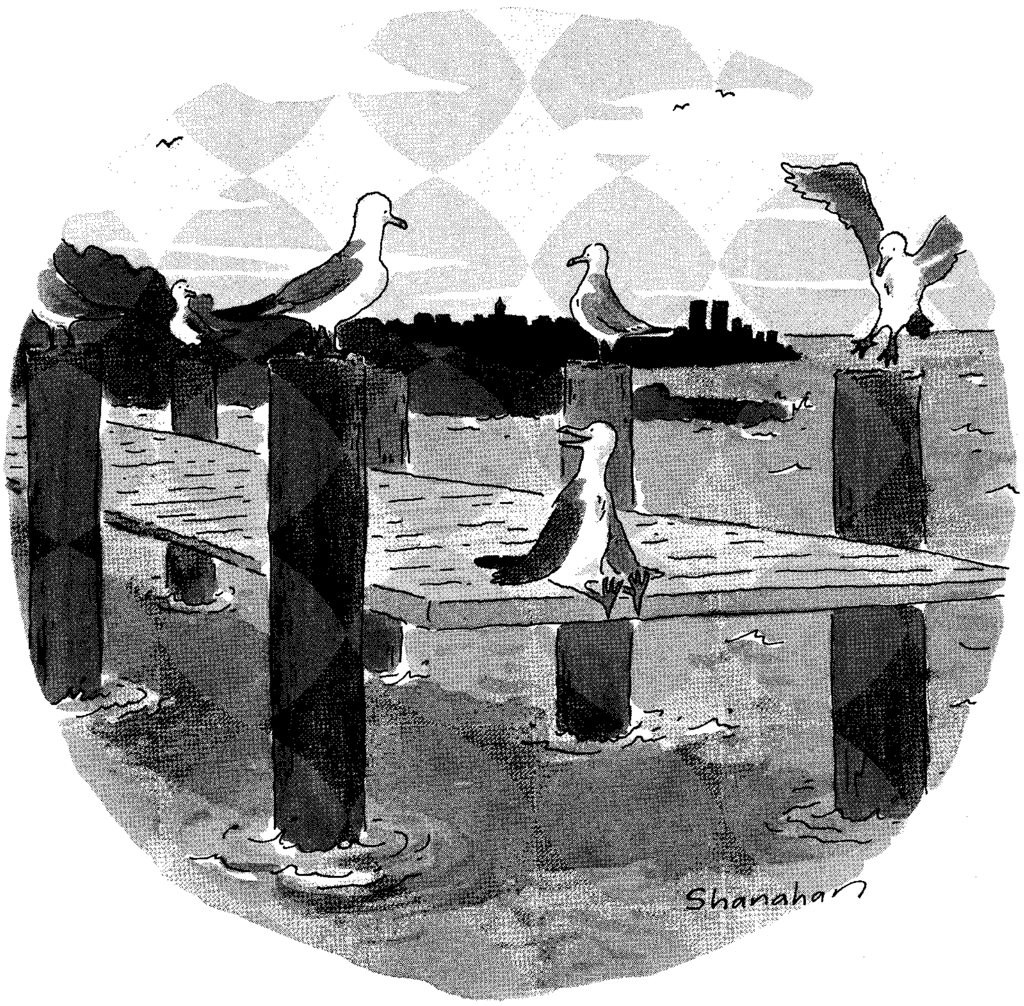
Hilary and I get hysterical. Mom says, "Oh poo. It's always the mother."

"Not always," Tom says, grinning. "Frequently."

Mom stands up, looks at us, and walks out. When I find her in the bathroom, she says, "Please make an excuse to your sister. But get that lightweight out of my house."

Tom is Rhody's second husband. After they leave, Hilary says, "Tommy is charming. Not constantly spaced out, like Number One."

Mom regards her with elaborate interest, then walks out again. When I find her in the bathroom again, she says, "Get Hilary rolling."



"I've always been a big Otis Redding fan."

SLEEPING in the television room, in the middle of the night I turn over on the clicker and the TV turns on. A young Telly Savalas comes into view, tough and disgusted, reflectively sucking his lollipop. I have to sleep again and fast: late-night loneliness is starting to crash over me like a wave breaking. From three rooms away, I can hear my mother's music playing.

In the morning, when I get up, everything is cool and quiet and the Burmese has thrown up fuzzy puddles. On the polished floor, the wet spots sit like tiny islands in a luminous, calm, dark sea. Baby Blue lies staring in the cat opium den, a square of kilim where he habitually does his catnip. Mom comes out, looks at the puddles, and peers at Florence, the Lab, then identifies the culprit. She cries, "*Don't* you try that!" as if the cat were still in the act of vomiting. She creeps along in her satin pajamas and scrubs at the floor. She glares at him; he has slunk under the armoire. "Doesn't he see what a burden he is?"

In the dining room, surrounded by hammered-silver bowls and crystal goblets behind glass doors, we eat cinnamon toast together. We say what we've been saying all year:

"How's it going?" I ask.

"Sucks."

"Oh, Ma."

"Well, please correct me and then I'll be quiet. Does it suck to have nobody, to have no friends—"

"You do have friends. You know a hundred people—the phone rings constantly." This is true, but a wrong tack.

"What would you say if I said that to you?" she cries. "'*Not helpful!*' And you'd be *right.*"

"Maybe it doesn't help. I know it's hard without Stu. I'm just saying you do have a lot of nice friends."

"Acquaintances. Not always such nice ones, either."

"What about Eliot, who we saw on Appleton Street? He was wonderful."

She snorts. "A lonely man with Scottie dogs."

"Mom, you do not have no friends."

"I have a limited circle. You don't realize. Yes, Hilary I have. A Nobel laureate she's not. I'm not criticizing her, but one friend coming over to wait for me to ferry her out to a restaurant hardly constitutes a broad social network. Raymond, as you know, is hopeless. His idea of a hot time is sitting in the BarcaLounger, nodding off while in the act of dialling the weather."

I laugh. Mom looks pleased.

"So, see?" I say. "You have some friends."

My point, though not precisely relevant, is supported by evidence. Mom gave a New Year's Day party only two weeks ago, at which eighty people embraced her until her hair was mashed and her face smudged pink. Two men grabbed her by the head and, together, pressed her to their shirtfronts. A beautiful young Swedish woman in a velvet hat said Mom was her best friend. The caterer, passing a tray, said Mom was *his* best friend. Nobody was smoking, everybody looked serene and healthy, the room smelled like a garden. There were three hairdressers (the youngest, who appeared to be a boy of twelve, had created Mom's new look), several painters and printmakers, two psychiatrists, two gallery owners, a woman filmmaker named Sluggo, a genial and sneaky-looking Harvard Medical School student, Mom's yoga teacher, Mom's accountant, Mom's lawyer, Mom's dentist, Mom's dog walker and cat sitter, Mom's women's group, and a superior-court judge. The mean age of the guests, even factoring in Raymond and Hilary, was about thirty-six.

When reminded of her social world, Mom likes to say, "My life is *colorful.* That's all it is." Now she says, instead, that she has forgotten how to feel like getting up in the morning—it's a skill she's just lost.

"Oh, Ma. Do you feel that bad?"

"What can I do?" she asks, seriously.

Talking too loud, I recite a list of things she could do: take or teach a painting class, study at Harvard extension, volunteer at the Gardiner, help feed the homeless, read to the blind—a boilerplate version of the sincere advice I labored over as a child. When I was young, in the year after my father died, while my mother and I tried to figure out the shape our life might assume, the moment she would become happy was always just ahead. Now I'm trying just as hard, and the time ahead is shorter.

I say that Stu hasn't been gone very long—that this is probably still the hardest part.

She pinches at her sprigs of hair. "Did I tell about the mousetrap?" Ida, who comes to clean, went to buy a trap, and they sold her a little glueboard: the mouse gets stuck by its feet. When Mom came into the kitchen late at night, the mouse was attached and struggling. "I thought, I can't face it. I went to bed. In the morning he had dragged it all the way to the sink and ripped his front feet off, but his back foot was still stuck. He was getting exhausted. He could still move, but he was permanently bogged down. It was horrible for him. I'll never get a trap like that again. I thought, Little rat, you're acting out the story of my life."

"*Oh, Ma.*"

Mom, grimly chewing: "Yes. 'Oh, Ma.' "

Weakly, I laugh again.

My mother says, "I never say this. But I am dead-ended here. I am sixty-seven years old. I am behind a wall. And I cannot break through."

TWO days before the surgery, on a morning of sudden spring weather popping into January, we meet Rhody in Cambridge. In Harvard Square, where everybody on the street has a crazed look of penetrating intelligence, we walk around, Rhody and Mom and I, passing Rhody's baby back and forth. We stop at an Italianate pastry shop and sit at a tiny table and drink coffee, and Mom puts a bit of cappuccino foam on the baby's lip. "Oh, I recall you both as babies," she

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A CADENZA

Puccini in hog-butchering time:
blood on the snow   the clockfaced
fearful valentine   DOCTOR IS IN
PLEASE BE SEATED   scarlatina
whooping cough   contagion
in the school gymnasium:

Che gelida manina: "Your tiny
hand is frozen," the printed leaflet
idiotically rendered it. Everything
cultural somehow made people squirm.
Puck-seeny? It sounded like
some kind of fig leaf: enough

to launch the ninth grade's darling
and her chum (who was plain), that evening,
onto high seas of silliness: "Your tiny . . ."
An aisle away, admiring and desolate,
I saw her as one whom privilege had bound for
the half-world of taffeta and gardenias,

Evening in Paris out of stoppered cobalt,
an apotheosis of merchandise,
la vie de Bohème in a garret
become a commodity, along with,
as the houselights go down, malnutrition
and hypothermia, kept, needless to say,

at a tactfully discreet distance
away from the cold, the carcasses, blood
on the snow, the heartbeat thundering
inside the valentine—and the rampant
infection they had no name for. It
struck that same week, a peripeteia

leaving expectation moot. To hear of it,
whose blood did not run cold?
Mine does, still, at that giggling cadenza,
that conclusion dredged up from,
it must be, all of
six decades ago.

—Amy Clampitt

• •

says. "Can you imagine, you are this big and you were *this* big?"

Rhody, gazing at Nicholas in his little seat: "It sounds like we just now attained our full growth."

"You were inside me. You were this big. Are you saying it isn't amazing?"

Of course it is. I remember her leaving for the hospital when Rhody was to be born—not what she looked like, but the hem of her skirt as she climbed into the car. I've just been reading a story about a man shooting his way out of a car trunk, and, crazily, I think of being inside my mother and blasting my way out. I think, like a child, I don't want her to go to the hospital again. This morning, Mom stood looking into the bathroom mirror with her palms flat against her temples, tightening the skin of her small, already beautiful face.

In the ladies' room, Rhody says, "Is this whole thing fucking nuts?"

In the mirror I pull at my neck from the sides and stare myself down. I say, "I'm thirty-eight. Soon I'll look older than Ma."

She laughs. "You already do."

"I might do it myself," I say.

"*Pardon*?"

"I think I'll have some kind of lift myself when I'm fifty or sixty."

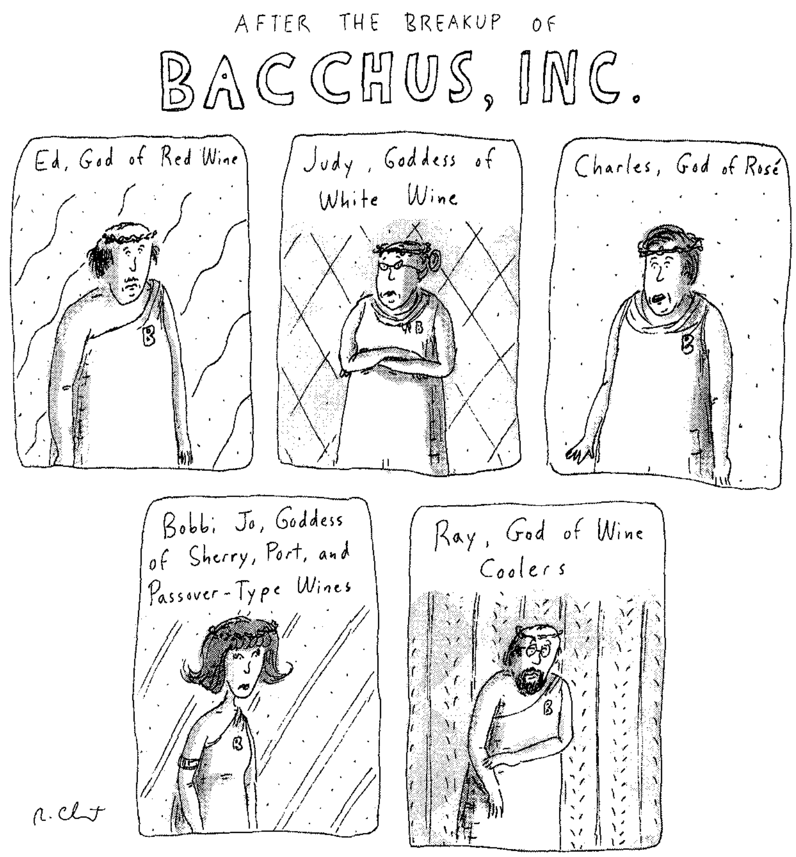
She looks at me until I feel shy, then closes the stall door behind her.

"Are you sorry she's doing it?" I call to her.

"Oh no," she says. "Not at all. This is a fragile old lady with asthma getting shot up with anesthesia in order to remove three lines from her neck area. It's not fucked up in the least. It's valorous and adorable." A minute later, coming out of the stall: "Do you get letters from Ma?"

"This year? Sure," I say, surprised. Does she think she's Mom's only daughter? I have actually been in that position, and can almost remember it: strolling on green lawn, a cloud of scented air, my mother's hand in its kid glove.

On the way back to the table, Rhoda tells me she sometimes waits to read Mom's letters, because she feels anxiety shimmering off the envelopes. Also because it's a chore to get them open. "There's so much Scotch tape sealing them up, you practically have to break in with a crowbar," she says, sliding into her chair, snatching the baby out of Mom's cradling arms.


AFTER THE BREAKUP OF
BACCHUS, INC.
Ed, God of Red Wine
Judy, Goddess of White Wine
Charles, God of Rosé
Bobbi Jo, Goddess of Sherry, Port, and Passover-Type Wines
Ray, God of Wine Coolers

Mom looks at us. "What's so funny?"

Nothing, we say. I am laughing, Rhody is chewing the baby's arm. Our mother is already on her feet. "I am exiting, you people," she says.

"Ma, sit down! Sit down!" we cry. We push her back into the chair—I'm amazed that it's so easy to sit her down against her will. She struggles and grabs for her coat, but she's light: each contributing one hand, Rhody and I can easily keep her seated. "Stop it!" she cries. "I am not going to be ganged up on!" She rips twenties out of her bag, throws them on the table. Her eyes are bright. But, as we keep our hands on her shoulders, she stops being frantic and becomes merely restive, then subdued, then calm. She sips coffee. She waves at the baby, into the baby's eyes.

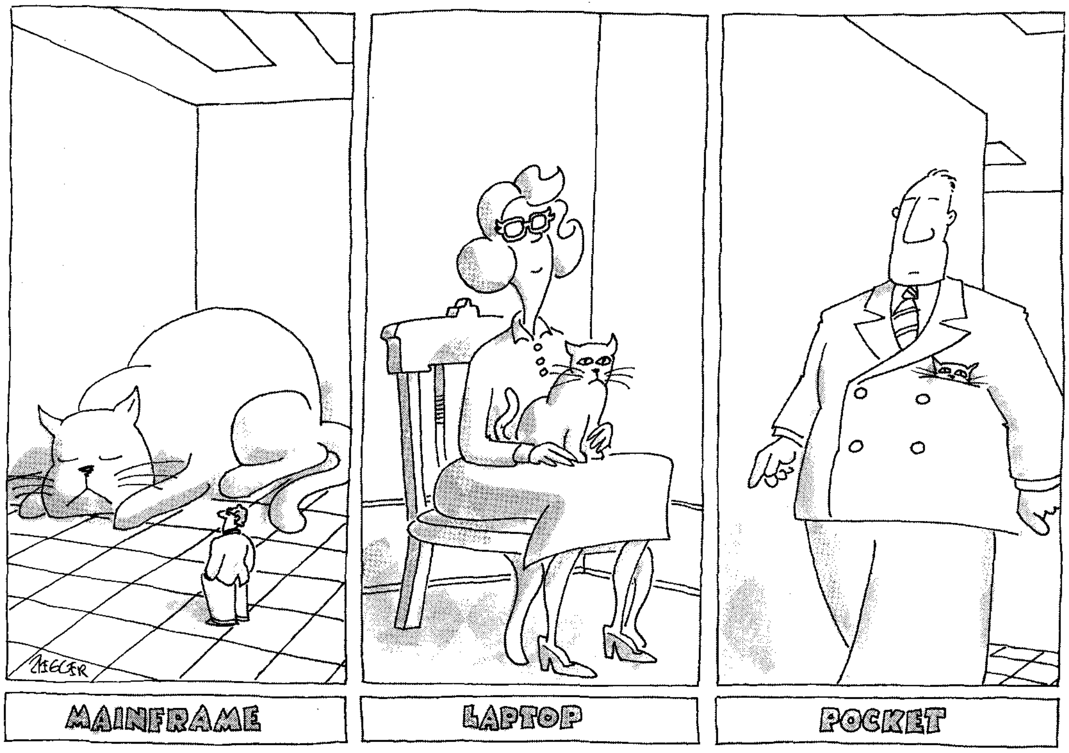
MY sister's hand on Mom's cashmere shoulder was slightly blue. Rhoda's hands are always faintly stained with pastels, the nails edged in fading color. My mother is still painting, too, but erratically now—her dreamy landscapes have recently given way to huge canvases thickly covered with oil paint. All year, as she's become noticeably sadder, the paintings have grown more lavish—the most recent are giant abstractions painted in flamboyant, despairing strokes.

Mom talks about colors as if they were people or animals—their special natures, the way each typically behaves, what it is like to enter a room where one of them is dominating the scene. This year she has stopped getting excited about finding new ones. "Do other people get starved for colors the way I do?" she occasionally asks, staring out the window like a child forbidden to go out into the bright street.

THAT night, two nights before the operation, Mom and Hilary fight. Hilary weeps, takes me into the pantry. "Mother doesn't realize how she treats me. I am sensitive about being talked to roughly, and Mother doesn't see how she hurts my feelings. Just because I don't say what she *wants*."

Fierce and pale, my mother holds her palm an inch from her face and stares into it. "This is how Hilary sees."

Later, Mom won't call Hilary, and she won't talk about it. We stay up and intently watch Henry Kissinger converse with Ted Koppel. Mom and Koppel look alike: sombre, quietly angry. Mom, through clamped teeth: "Mr. Koppel, siss iss a comblete lie. . . . But I know siss lie egg-sists. It follows me



everyvhere, ass I dravel siss verld.”

The next morning, her face is puffed up and she goes back and stays in her room. Her eyes swell. She comes out and walks back and forth in the dining room, the glasses in the breakfront tinkling. She walks, talks for hours, grows hoarse.

I think she’s depressed, I tell her—she’s bereaved. Maybe we could talk about it, maybe she should consult a shrink, somebody who could actually, possibly, help, give her some perspective. I talk on like that for quite a while.

She laughs bitterly. “Oh, or maybe I should just move to Florida, too, with the other Jews. Should I do that? They love it. They think they won’t die there.”

“No, seriously,” I say.

She tells me, “I am not going to tolerate being condescended to. I am still a piece of the person I was.”

FINALLY the surgery is over. I am staying with Mom while she recuperates for a night in a hotel attached to the hospital, where, painstakingly patting at their lips, the guests sip meals brought on trays. The neck-lift surgeon is an old friend of my mother’s, Uncle Daniel, we call him, a man I find I resent, as if he were the culprit, the person who has—done what? Dealt my mother the gratuitous blow from which she must now hope to recover. He stands in the doorway, hale and effervescent, teasing Mom while I subtly snub him. I now recall that as I rode up on the train I imagined that the surgery might change her horribly. But she looks like a cartoon character—a cunning little rabbit with a toothache.

Later Mom takes a Valium, shreds her napkin. “Should I have not done this? Was this crazy? Did I make another mistake?”

“Not at all, Ma,” I say. “You haven’t really been making mistakes, have you? Isn’t it just a bad year?” Together we are casting our doubts in the usual interrogative form—how best to live?

Mom asks, “Do you believe that people can ever truly heal?”

“In most cases, absolutely. Don’t you?”

“*And in other cases?*”

“I want to think they can.”

“*But do you?*”

I say, “I’m sorry. I’m not sure.”

Mom says, “I knew it!”

AFTER dinner, I make us laugh. I am telling about a bat mitzvah, how the Resnik boys—now two morose grown men wearing crumpled suits—kept coming up and asking about our family, crying, “*What ever happened to Rhody?*” Finally I said to one of them, “Bruce. Please. Nothing happened to Rhody. You just haven’t seen her. Just because you haven’t personally seen somebody doesn’t mean they died.” My mother starts shrieking, “My stomach hurts! I’m wetting my pants!” and jumps up and crosses her legs. As she staggers toward the bathroom, her pajama cuffs drop over her pretty little feet.

She runs into the bathroom. There’s a knock on the bedroom door, and while I’m letting Rhoda in we hear a thud. Then silence.

Ma, Ma!

Mom has fainted deftly—not cracked her head against any porcelain, just folded onto the bathmat and the floor. She is lying on her back with her eyes open. She is looking at the ceiling, which has a gilded wallpaper depicting outer space as a sort of supper club—festive planets and opalescent moons, comets trailing silver dust.

We move to grab her, to lift her like a package and put this event in the past.

“Don’t pick me up yet!” She bats our hands away, as if we were trying to knock her down. While we make further assisting gestures, she smacks at us, until we give up and stand still. Mom’s got a point: Rhody and I are young and robust and Mom is old and lying on the floor—there’s nothing she’ll let us do to obscure those facts.

The planets twirl above us. Mom keeps looking up, blinking fiercely, as if the stars could rain down and fall into her eyes.

After a while Rhody says, “Wow, you fell beautifully.”

“You didn’t hit your head,” I say. “Your fall was actually perfect.”

Rhody and I are out of moves. Mom is out of questions. “Oh poo,” Mom says. “What a picture. The gang of two. There you are just standing there, upside down in space, saying the things I knew you would say before you were even born.” —JANE SHAPIRO

GIRL GAMES

Angelina says she'd walk to Detroit—although it would take two days, with no scenery at all to pass the time—if Albert would swear to her on the phone that after he opened the door he would kiss her for ten minutes. "At least ten minutes," she says, "and then, all right, I don't care what. If he wants to talk after that, all right, then I'll talk." Angelina's right leg pumps like a boy's leg, nonstop, and the sole of her sandal hits the slate of the patio, slap, slap, slap.

"I'd walk, I could do it. Or," she says, "I could borrow your car."

This is how Angelina pays a visit. She's older than me, and she takes advantage, a neighborly sort of advantage. She borrows tools—"the weaponry of the house," as she calls wrenches and power saws. She still has the twenty-foot aluminum ladder. Since Albert has gone off to Detroit to think about things, Angelina doesn't have a car. I'm amazed how much she gets around without one. She walks. She bums rides. She stops by here.

"How about it?" Angelina says.

And she kicks out a foot toward me. I'm flat on the ground, where I've been pressing my arms and legs, in arcs, on the grass. I have ironed out a summer version of a snow angel—hot, green-bodied, aromatic.

"Or," I say, and I sit up, "I could drive you. When do we leave?"

"No, he still says we need to talk. I can't go yet."

"So talk to him," I say.

"It's an excuse," Angelina says. "He says talk is the way out of trouble, and I say, 'Not for me. It's the way in.' I've had enough trouble. Kiss him first, that's what I say. Then you know what you've got to talk about."

"Maybe he doesn't want to kiss you."

"Of course. That's the point. I don't want to see him until he wants to kiss me. Then I'd walk to get there. That's what I mean."

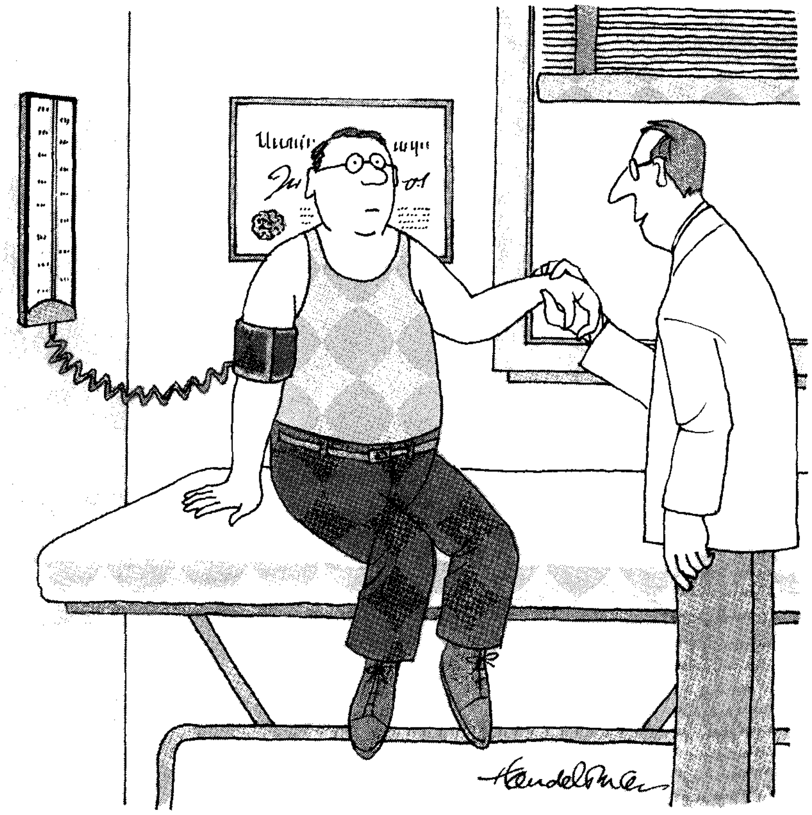
Angelina picks up her glass of red wine and flicks out a floating bit of dandelion fluff. "You know, I was such an idiot," she says, "that I used to do the 'loves me, loves me not' count with dandelions! It took forever. But it makes more sense, in a way, not knowing what's going on." She takes a long sip of wine. "Darlene, all right. Good. When the time comes, you can drive."

Love is not the only thing on Angelina's mind, thank God for that. I met her at the hearings on the city incinerator, and she was the one who forced the engineer in the suit to list the toxic emissions. She badgered him, kept saying, "You mean you don't know what comes out of the stack?" until he pulled out a sheet from his file and read it, one thing after another. We had a drink at the Crystal Lounge afterward, and she told the whole table, including the city manager, "These guys need corrupting. They believe in the clean life!"

Angelina lives three miles down the road, two blocks left. She's inside the city limits, and she walks out here for a glass of wine once or twice a week. This is a dirt road. Angelina considers me an adventurous person, living on a dirt road in the late days of the twentieth century. She likes my daughters, Jordan and Julie, too, and she brings them a present every time, something she's found along the road—a weed stalk with a bug ball, a bunch of daylilies, or, one time, the skull of a cat, road kill.

Angelina is older than my mother. She's past the low end of middle age—I don't know, she's maybe fifty. It's hard to say. Her hair is the color of dirt, the sand fields here, and it's what my mother calls flyaway hair, as if she never combed it. We are exactly the same height. About the same weight, skinny, except for our speed-skater thighs. These are as good as family resemblances, Angelina says. But we really don't look anything alike. I comb my hair. My skin is tight on my bones. My ears are pierced, three places on each lobe. My nose was pierced, too, although I haven't worn even a stud since the girls were born. Last week, Angelina brought me a gold hoop for my nose—she thinks I shouldn't change my habits just because I've given birth to somebody.

So today, when I saw her walking up the road, I got out the hoop, stuck it in my nose, and pulled up my hair in the pineapple topknot that's good for hot days, sitting outside. At the door, Angelina said, "Well, it's Cinderella!" She shook her head, messed up her hair even more, and said, "Which makes me, I guess, the ugly stepsister! I've got the feet for it." She took off



"Blood pressure is fine. Now let me just check your pessimism for the 'Times.'"

her sandals, clapped them like erasers, and said, "Get the girls. Here's something for them." She pulled two shell casings from the pockets of her jeans. "Somebody's been shooting off of a pickup, I bet. They still smell. You heard any shots down the road lately?"

Angelina knows the news. She's better than NPR. She's right here, and she picks up on everything. You'd think she would have a little more sense about her own life, but that's how it often is—the heart could use a brain, as my mother always says.

Angelina says a woman who puts a ring in her nose should not be led around like a cow.

She means this as encouragement to me, and I say, "I know. O.K., I won't be."

"Don't be too agreeable," she says.

"Don't give so much advice," I say.

And that makes her laugh, triumphant, and say, "Good! Good for you."

We sit around on the patio, which is decaying. The spaces between the flagstones have filled with quackgrass and dandelion. I hate to spray with Kleenup, because then the weeds turn brown, and that looks worse. I don't like the girls walking barefoot on that spray. It's hard to know these days how much trouble to take to keep things the way they're supposed to be. One thing looks bad, but then what you do to correct it is worse. And in this case weeds win out, in the balance of what's least worst.

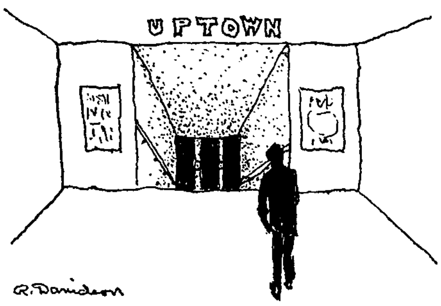
Angelina has no problem with weeds. She admires them. "Which is why I admire Albert, maybe," she says. "He wants to be uncultivated. But he reads *Rolling Stone*, you know. And he's got that good-guy haircut, side-trimmed. He's not so wild. Show me a human being anywhere who's not cultivated. You can't escape it."

"Well, you look pretty unkempt," I say.

"Darlene, my God, that ring gives you nerve," she says. And then she twists around one of my mother's favorite sayings—"Well, looks are everything! They're exactly what you see. And what you see here is a mess, O.K. The toll life takes"—she goes on in a pumped-up voice—"when you care about *pleasure*, and nothing fucking else."

Jordan and Julie are playing "car" in the front yard. It's a simple game: when they hear a car in the distance, they run to the tree and wait until the car comes into view. When they see it half a mile down the dirt road, they tag the tree trunk and yell "Car!" and race to the front porch, where they duck down behind the shrubbery until the car passes. The point of the game is the racing, mainly, but also tricking the car, I think, into not knowing they're around. The driver thinks it's a clear road, no kids in the vicinity, and the girls love that. "He never saw us!" Julie yells to Angelina, after the first run.

This game gives me a scare. It's a safe version, like practice, for something more dangerous. But Angelina is all praise. "You girls are so fast!" she shouts back.



By the time we finish the red wine, it's late afternoon. The girls sit in the shade, picking grass blades. It's quiet, and the air has smoothed out. Angelina stands up and stretches her legs, one after the other, a split; her foot goes above her head, like a ballet stretch. She says, "Anybody want to walk around the block?"

"Get June," Jordan says. That's the cat, June, for Juniper, who accompanies us on walks, like a dog.

The girls grab the cat from a chair inside, and we head out, down the middle of the road. The block is no city block—it's four miles around. These are one-mile sections of fairly straight roads—half a mile to the next crossroad, down that and up the hill to Summit, which is paved, and a mile down Summit to the next crossroad, Hughes, down that to this road, and home. The cat knows the turns.

EMPTY ROOM

A faint pink-gray lamp, tincture of rose and iodine,
in the apartment across the street: serious light,
the kind where "scenes" take place. I wonder
what fixtures store sells it, what melancholy
factory assembles it. It may be backwash
from wallpaper chosen in the most delicate
of compromises: sailing vessels
of dark-purplish hue arrayed in equal measure
with sprays of white flowers, hemlock perhaps,
pinked under lampshade fringes. Conflict
is easy to imagine, even in distant emptiness.
And what are the yellow lumps on the coffee table?
Quinces, fruit of the rose, a single bite
taken from each. The white splotch? A doily,
ovate from this angle, bleeding grayly on the mantelshelf,
like a wound. And the oblong cabinet?
A Renaissance sideboard, a credence, with faces carved
in each panel: Joy and Grief and Desire
and, rigged to pour gin, the grave smile
of Alienation. What credence to place in what I see?
None, perhaps. It's useless, a friend once told me,
to think about other people's inner lives.
But what if there are no people
in the inner life? Only their traces, unclearly seen,
full of shadow and mystery—what then?
And how to stop from thinking, from puzzling,
late at night, the stars turning above the clouds
above my head?

A hand—the face and body out of view—
reaches for the lamp and flicks the light switch off.

—David Woo

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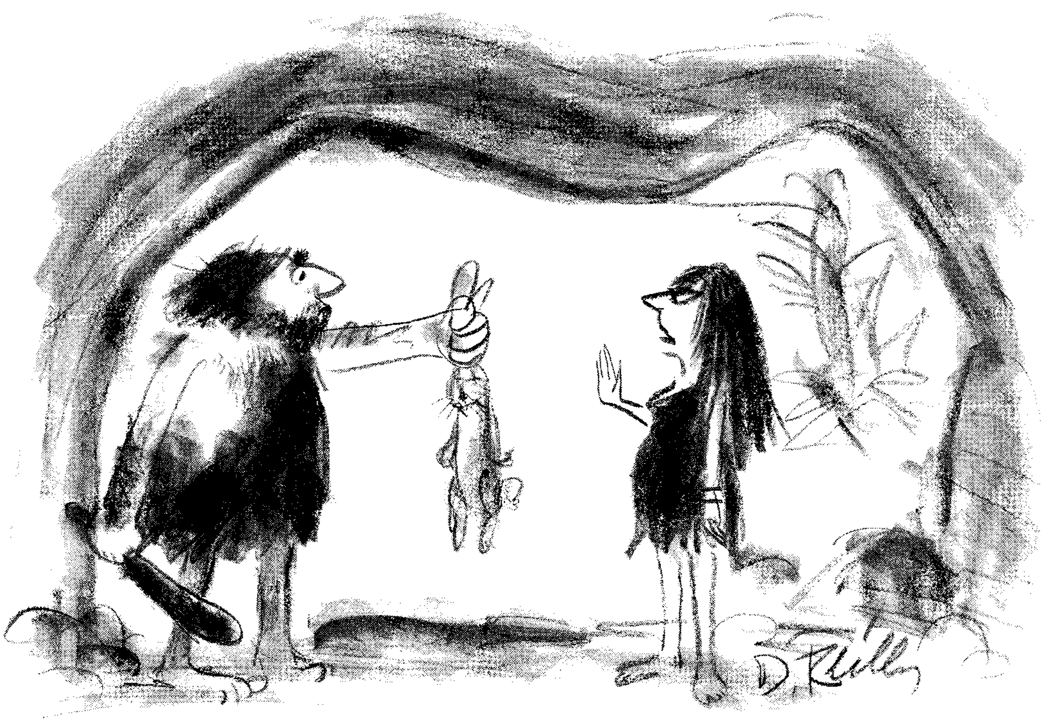
She walks behind the girls, and when they play "car" along the way and run off into the weeds to flatten themselves and hide, June goes along and disappears, too.



"Sorry—I don't approach food that way."

There's not much traffic. But after we turn onto Hughes, the girls yell "Car!" and dive into the weeds. Angelina and I shift our walk to the edge of the road. A gray pickup passes, and then brakes to a stop ahead of us. It's Eugene, who works in the post office, and his nephew Cory riding in the back, windblown. Eugene lived for a while with Albert's brother. He doesn't wait for us to walk to the truck; he climbs out, still in his mailman uniform, and says hello to Angelina. He's laughing. He walks past us and over to the edge of the road. "Come on out of there. I see you girls," he says.

Jordan and Julie stand up. They stay in the waist-high weeds, and they don't move.

"So you thought we couldn't see you?" Eugene says. "Hey, Cory, look who's here."

Cory stands in the back of the truck, and, like the girls, he doesn't move. He doesn't answer. And I like the boy very much at that minute. I walk over and pat the truck.

The girls are angry. They won't budge. Eugene can hang around as long as he wants.

Angelina says, "Eugene, what's new? Anybody talked to Albert lately?"

"Albert's in seclusion," Eugene says. He walks back to the truck. "But I guess you know that. I think he's working at a party store."

I dust off the fender while Eugene and Angelina talk. I say, "Hi, Cory."

He says, "Hello." He's looking at the hoop in my nose, so I bat at it with my finger, and this makes him smile.

When Eugene climbs up into the truck and shifts into gear, Cory sits down, his back against the cab. I slap the truck goodbye, and Cory waves.

"A sweet kid," I say.

"Unlike his uncle," says Angelina.

Jordan and Julie walk out of the weeds. Julie is so mad she's crying.

"The crumb!" Jordan says.

"Forget him!" Angelina says. "Look, it's a game the man doesn't know how to play!" She picks Julie up by the hands and swings her around—the "airplane game." "Anyway," Angelina says, "he didn't see June, did he?"

"No!" the girls say. And they jump at that. They call the cat, and there she is, Juniper, walking out of the weeds.

"What you girls need is another game," Angelina says. "Call it 'car scare' or something. Hide when you hear a car, just like you do now, but then jump out! You should be highly *visible*. You know what I mean. Jump out and scare the hell out of Eugene! Whoever."

Jordan and Julie listen to this, with sidelong glances at me. But I don't give a clue about what I think. I don't know what to make of "car scare."

"Make them *think!*" Angelina says. "Make them think twice!"

Jordan is laughing. She grabs Julie's hand, and they run ahead, down the middle of the road, shrieking out high-pitched *yaaaa* sounds. They flail their arms, and their hair flies like crazy.

I'M ready when Angelina calls the next week for a ride to Detroit. "It's hot. I could use a drive," I tell her.

"Bring the girls," she says.

"No, it's just me," I tell her. "They're with my mother for a couple of days. I've been reading books. You know, living the high-risk life. I'll bring something along. What do you want with Albert—the afternoon?"

"That's exactly what I want," she says. "You've saved me a pair of shoes, Darlene. Thanks. Two days' wear and tear on the spirit. Although Albert did say, as of today, that he'd have walked halfway, too. So, that's good. He swears he will not be the first one to talk. That did it. See, I am hopeful here."

And when I pick her up, I can see the optimism. She's wearing a red T-shirt, white shorts, like somebody on a team going to a meet.

"We are mix and match," she says.

This is true. I've got on my white tank top and the red wraparound skirt, the most presentable skirt I own, according to my mother.

"Except you've got seven earrings there—good for you—and I've got none," Angelina says.

"I've been thinking about piercing the other side of my nose," I say, "to balance things out."

"Balance isn't everything," Angelina says. "Seven's a lucky number."

"I'm not superstitious," I say. "Well, maybe I'll get two more, then, for nine. Can you pierce anything besides the nose and ears?"

"Darlene, sweetheart. You can pierce

anything. I saw a woman once with earrings on her knuckles. Flat things, like castanets."

"I want my hands free," I say.

"I know," Angelina says. "I want my ears free. It's all they can do to listen. The planet is dying, you know, and Albert says, 'You and me, let's talk.' I say, 'Kiss my ears.' He says, 'Kiss my ass.' I say, 'Kiss my ears.' Albert says, 'Listen.' I say, 'Kiss my ass.' He says, 'All right, God damn it, kiss my ears.' That's how it goes, back and forth, your brain just wants to shut down and say, 'All right, world, come to an end—we are not a species ready for good times.' "

"I thought you'd worked this out with Albert." I turn onto I-94, the straight shot into Detroit.

"True. That's the deal, for now," Angelina says. "But somebody's going to say something, at some point. You know that. And we'll have to figure it out all over again. It's like arms talks. Everybody wants to say, 'Hell with this, forget the arms, stash all of it, let's go home and make love. Let's go lie on sofas!' But you know how it is—negotiate, negotiate. Everybody's got to negotiate. Like they've got to prove they've got a brain, every day. Well, I say, 'Albert, I prefer the proof I've got a body.' " Angelina does a sort of drumroll on her thighs with the palms of her hands.

"The brain's a sex organ," I tell her. "I was reading that. You can't just ignore it."

"Well, my brain says, 'Chuck all the smart ideas and redo the world for pleasure.' What's the point of a smart brain if the body can't walk around saying, 'Good, this is good'?"

"Yeah, clean up the air," I say.

"Anything to breathe easier," Angelina says. "Keep reading, Darlene. You ought to be an engineer! I mean it. Redo all this stuff. Conduct some meeting in your leather halter—all right, no concessions, all the earrings—and say, 'O.K., we've got the technology, now the plan is *breathe easy.*' "

We're past the airport, headed downtown, and I'm tired already. I tell Angelina I'll drop her off and drive down to the riverfront. Sit around for a while. Do some reading.

And that's how it works out. I drop off Angelina at Albert's apartment, and I'm down the Chrysler Freeway, off to Hart Plaza. It's got some green grass on a slope at the river, and that's where I claim a spot—a good view of the powerboats, and the idiots speeding out there whose mission in life is to moon the crowd on shore. But they blur by so fast nobody cares.

Things could go either way for Angelina and Albert. I'm not sure what she expects. I've seen Albert walk around with her, the way he slips his arm over her shoulder, very easy, like that's how he wants to touch everything—no fanfare. He is much quieter than Angelina. He can sit in a chair in the yard and just look around.

I think that's an important thing in a man these days. The same as noise and nerve is something a woman had better have. My mother says, "Honey, why must you cause so much trouble?" And I give her Angelina's reply: "Because that's what it takes."

This afternoon, though, no trouble. I stretch out on my back and stare at the bowl of blue sky. A chunk of the RenCen, curved at the top, silvery, cuts into the blue. But nothing else. No clouds. The air doesn't come down from overhead, but rises up off the ground, hot, full of grass smells and spilled beer.

I shut my eyes and doze a bit. When I open them, a little girl's round face hangs there in the sky. She's leaning down.

"You have seven earrings in your head," she says. She stands the way kids do, their legs like stalks.

I sit up.

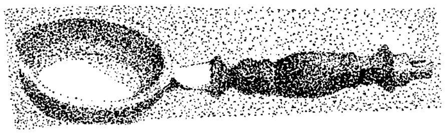
"And you've got one red ring on your finger," I say.

"This is my magic ring," the girl says. She holds her hand out. "It makes me invisible."

"I can see you."

"Well, it's not working right now." The girl sits down and leans close. She shouldn't be so familiar with strangers. I look around for a parent. Nobody's watching her.

"Well, here," I say, and I feel like Angelina, the woman of ordinary gifts. "I've got something for you." I pull my hand from behind my back. "Here's an invisible magic ring. And the trick is it makes you visible. You appear! You wear this ring, you're right here."



I hand her nothing, and she slips it on her finger.

"That's it. You look great," I say. "I see every hair on your head."

"Thanks," she says. And she runs off, shouting to a person in cutoffs, probably her mother, under a tree.

That's the only event of the afternoon. No gunfire. No scares. The boats fly by, roaring. The little girl disappears. Two men in suits sit under the tree and smoke. I look at my book and read one sentence after another. The words look like live things, with arms and legs, appendages, bodies of their own. They move and lie down. And, put together, some of them even make sense.

Angelina's at the curb. She looks O.K. She climbs in the car, and her hair is messed up—that's all right—and she's got her eyeliner drawn on, with the upswing at the corner. She hasn't been crying.

Her chin's red—as if somebody who didn't shave was kissing her all afternoon.

"Did you have a good time?" I ask her.

"I *always* have a good time," she says.

I know that's not true, but I also know this means she will not be mournful and miserable all the way back. I'm no good at sympathy, not with her. But I probably ought to learn. The time could come.

"I've got to think about this," she says. "Let me sleep." She doesn't look tired, but she slumps down in the seat and shuts her eyes. She's faking. She's breathing a little too fast—dreaming up, I suppose, the next deal to cut with Albert.

It's still hot, but the sun is pulling back. Nobody's out on the streets.

I open the window and let the heat roll through. Angelina crosses her arms and slouches lower. Her hair falls over her eyes. A good enough day, if you add it all up—I saw plenty of blue sky. I saw a round-faced girl with a red ring. But this business of driving somebody else around for her pleasure wears a person down. I breathe in—one-two-three—and breathe out. When you're tired and haven't been kissed all day, all you can do is drive slow and keep your eyes open. Count those breaths. And think about how many girls you're not even seeing out there.

—Janet Kauffman

ANNALS OF SCIENCE

A SILENT CHILDHOOD—I

SOMETIME in the late seventh century B.C., it occurred to Psamtik I, the first of the Saitic kings of Egypt, to wonder which might be the original language of the world. Psamtik was, by all accounts, a forward-looking ruler. He was the first to open his country to large-scale immigration, receiving thereby a substantial infusion of Hellenic culture, and also, not incidentally, the Hellenic mercenaries with which he secured his reign against the claims of eleven rivals and against the Scythian, Ethiopian, and Assyrian armies on his frontiers. Considering that he undertook his scholarship between perennial military campaigns, it is not surprising that his interest in the language question had territorial overtones: the country possessed of the *lingua mundi* would own an indisputable hegemonic legitimacy. Yet he pursued his question with an unbiased rigor and a devotion to the scientific method which could be seen as admirably unsentimental, if not downright brutal.

As recounted by Herodotus two hundred years later, Psamtik's experiment was a simple one: two infants were taken from their mothers at birth and placed in the isolation of a shepherd's hut. The shepherd was instructed not to speak to them. They were reared on a diet of goats' milk and silence until one day two years later when, the shepherd returning to his hut, the pair accosted him with their first utterance. The word they had developed was "bekos," which, after semantic inquiry on the part of the King, was determined to mean "bread" in the language of the Phrygians, an Indo-European people of Asia Minor. With the shepherd's account in front of him, Psamtik was objective enough to abandon his nationalistic hopes and stand by the results of his research. He announced that Phrygian was the protolanguage, and thus established himself as the protolinguist, the earliest practitioner of an enduring scientific pursuit.

Sadly—or perhaps fortunately, since except for the word *bekos* and a few texts and inscriptions little remains to us of the Phrygian language—Psamtik's research has not stood the test of time. He has been accused of a certain methodological informality. There was no way of ascertaining, for instance, whether or not the children had a natural grasp of many languages and were merely expressing an innate preference for Phrygian baked goods. Historians are satisfied that Phrygia was the birthplace of the flute and the Dionysian orgy but probably not of human speech, and Psamtik is remembered by science mainly for his errors.

Nevertheless, in nearly every college primer on linguistics and in innumerable late-night conversations among practicing linguists, he is remembered. One such text, Vivien Tartter's 1986 "Language Processes," has a two-sentence "Conclusion" that reads, "We still have a long way to go to understand language and its processing, and many exciting years of research ahead. But we have come a long way since Psammetichos!" The King's inclusion in the book, like his general durability, is evidence to the contrary. Psamtik is very much with us. While his experiment was flawed in fulfilling its declared intention, it was in other ways brilliant—an incisive bit of scientific prescience. It embodied both the theoretical questions and the practical quandaries that still bedevil the discipline. Beyond the arid statistics and the arcane analysis that characterize modern linguistics looms a philosophical question: What makes us special as a species? What part of our essential humanity is expressed in our ability to communicate with language? It is in that light that his scientific sin—his experimentation on children—takes on the import that continues to subtly trouble the science. For his sin was of the essence: in investigating one piece of the human charter, Psamtik, by his lack of compassion, did violence to another.

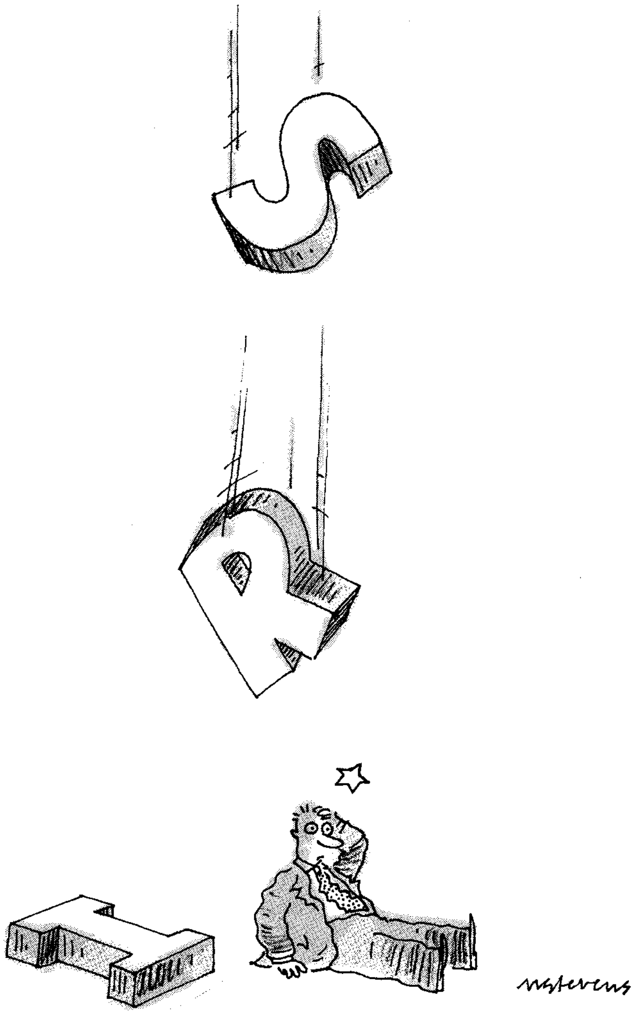
The science initiated by the Egyptian king has been revised and reinvented many times over the millennia, most recently in a Horn & Hardart on Woodland Avenue in Philadelphia, where Noam Chomsky began working out a set of ideas so revolutionary that their publication, in 1957, is known among linguists as the Event. To its credit as a human endeavor, the science of linguistics has maintained through its generations a certain wistful indecision about its ambitions. Only a stalwart linguist—or an especially myopic one—can avoid the temptation to look up from the voluminous tabulations of syntax and phonemics for an occasional glance into the heart of human nature, much the way astronomers look through the silica lens at the origins of time. Linguistics and astronomy constitute an unlikely sisterhood, for they are both constrained to be more observational than experimental—astronomy because its subjects are too distant to be experimented on, and linguistics because its subjects are too human. No longer are children impressed from the crib to serve as guinea pigs. But the revelations about how we acquire language still come from children: wild children, who have grown up with beasts as their only companions; abused or neglected children whose family histories replicate the isolation in the shepherd's hut, sometimes with far more attendant horror. The cases are exceedingly rare and mostly fleeting. They become the property of whichever researcher is fortunate enough to be present at whichever dark hour. In that regard, no subject has ever fallen into the lap of science out of a more incomprehensible world than the little girl who limped through the doors of a Los Angeles County welfare office in the fall of 1970, accompanied by her nearly blind and almost equally traumatized mother.

Temple City, California, is in many ways a typical town of the San Gabriel Valley, and Golden West Avenue, which runs due north through it, is a typical Valley residential street. It is as straight as a surveyor's rod, and you might suppose that its intended destination is the San Gabriel Mountains, whose shadowed canyons and snow-panelled peaks rise above the grid of suburban Valley streets like the promise of a wider world. But Golden West Avenue never reaches the San Gabriels, near as they are. It ends in the more prosperous reaches of Arcadia, and the San Gabriels remain a taunting vision, as distant in their way as the affluent hills of Hollywood, fifteen miles to the west.

Heading up Golden West Avenue from Las Tunas Drive, Temple City's main drag, you pass the parklike acreage of the civic center and, a block farther on, the steepled Church of Christ. Then the public places are behind you, and you enter an orderly regime of small houses—bungalows, for the most part—which become more modest and insular block by block. Each house has a driveway and a yard, and a number of the yards are separated from one another by chain-link fences. Toward the Arcadia town line, five royal palms nearly a hundred feet high float above the avenue like an incongruous apparition. They are the neighborhood's only aristocratic flourish. For here there are no rolling estates, no guarded gates, no Armed Response medallions such as dot the curbs of Bel Air and Mulholland Drive. The equation of prominence and privacy that prevails in the wealthy precincts of Los Angeles is here turned on its head: security lies in a respectful anonymity—an injunction, in a land of compact privacies, to mind one's own business. People don't come to Temple City to be discovered, they come to be left alone. Golden West Avenue is above all a quiet street of quiet families. Before the disruption of that quiet in November of 1970, the residents of one small house behind the row of palms were known to their neighbors as the quietest family of all.

The disruption was spectacular—enough so to earn a week's worth of stories in the Los Angeles *Times*, sandwiched between accounts of the trial of Charles Manson, the policies of Governor Ronald Reagan, and the bombing of Hanoi. "GIRL, 13, PRISONER SINCE INFANCY, DEPUTIES CHARGE; PARENTS JAILED," the headline on November 17th read. The following day, a story headed "MYSTERY SHROUDS HOME OF ALLEGED CHILD PRISONER" featured a photograph of two men standing in a driveway: the girl's elderly, bespectacled father, clothed in rumpled khakis and a rumpled hat, one hand in his pocket and the other loosely holding a cigarette; and her brother, a tall teen-ager dressed in black, his arms folded and his face wadded in belligerent distress.

But it was another photograph that inflamed the public imagination and brought the curious cruising along Golden West Avenue in a slow, neck-craning procession that lasted the better part of a week. The photograph is of a girl's face, smooth, olive-shaped, pretty. A strand of dark hair has escaped from behind her ear to hang across her forehead. Her head is turned with an attentive tilt toward the camera, but her eyes do not meet the lens. She looks above us, as though some object of interest were hovering over the photographer's shoulder. Her expression gives nothing away. It is composed but not self-conscious, withdrawn but with no trace of sullenness. Her mouth, its full lower lip closed against the serrated curve of the upper in a perfect Cupid's bow, turns up at the ends in what might be the beginning of a smile, except that she is otherwise so serious, so pensive and watchful. The energy in her face is all in her eyes. Without beseeching, they attract. If her face has an adult's earnestness, her eyes have the straightforward curiosity of a toddler, unburdened by any evident capacity for prejudice or appraisal. Her innocence is incongruous with the report of the epic abuse she suffered.



APRIL SHOWERS

That her condition was cause for concern had been immediately apparent to the social worker who received her and her mother in the welfare office one morning in early November. Like much else in the child's history, her arrival there was a fluke. The mother had come seeking help not for the child but for herself; three weeks earlier, she had finally managed to flee an abusive marriage, and was living nearby with her parents, who were all but desti-

"I ask that the record show that the witness does not presume to speak for the animal kingdom but is testifying here strictly in his capacity as a beaver."

tute. Cataracts and a detached retina had rendered her ninety per cent blind in her left eye and totally blind in the right. She was searching for the services for the blind. But, leading her daughter by one hand and her aged mother by the other, she had stumbled mistakenly into the general social-services office. The eligibility worker whom she approached was transfixed by the child, a small, withered girl with a halting gait and a curious posture—unnaturally stooped, hands held up as though resting on an invisible rail. The worker alerted her supervisor to what she thought was an unreported case of autism in a child she estimated to be six or seven years old.

The supervisor did not confirm the autism diagnosis but agreed that something was amiss. The ensuing inquiries found the girl to be a teen-ager, though she weighed only fifty-nine pounds and was only fifty-four inches tall. She was in much worse physical shape than at first suspected: she was incontinent, could not chew solid food and could hardly swallow, could not focus her eyes beyond twelve feet, and, according to some accounts, could not cry. She salivated constantly, spat indiscriminately. She had a ring of hard callus around her buttocks, and she had two nearly complete sets of teeth. Her hair was thin. She could not hop, skip, climb, or do anything requiring the full extension of her limbs. She showed no perception of heat or cold.

Of most interest to the scientists who were to become her constant companions was that she could not talk. What the social worker had mistaken for an autistic's abstention from verbal communication was in fact a complete inability. Her vocabulary comprised only a few words—probably fewer than twenty. She understood "red," "blue," "green," and "brown"; "Mother" and some other names; the verbs "walk" and "go"; and assorted nouns, among them "door," "jewelry box," and "bunny." Her productive vocabulary—those words she could utter—was even more limited. She seemed able to say only "Stopit" and "Nomore," and a couple of shorter negatives. The social worker paid a visit to the child's home and convinced the mother that her daughter needed attention. She was admitted to Childrens Hospital of Los Angeles, for treatment of extreme malnutrition.

An explanation for the child's state was eventually pieced together, thanks to the efforts of the Temple City police in the days following her discovery and to the persistent elaborations of scientists over the next several years. A doctoral dissertation on the child, written by Susan Curtiss, a graduate student at the University of California at Los Angeles and the linguist who was to spend the most time with her, begins, "To understand this case history, one must understand [the] family background." And, indeed, every scientist involved with the unfortunate child would be drawn again and again through that background, much as the rubberneckers had been drawn down Golden West Avenue—hoping to find in the neighborhood, the house, and the story of the household some answer.

Like most personal histories, the child's preceded her by years. Her parents migrated to the Los Angeles area from different parts of the country but from similarly impoverished circumstances. Clark, her father, was a native of the Pacific Northwest, and Irene, her mother, was from Oklahoma. Irene's family had moved west to escape the dust bowl. Like other real-life Joads, they ran out of continent before reaching the promised land, and the children approached maturity with little prospect except the assurance of a restricted future. When Irene was in her early twenties, she found a traditional solution for her predicament (and, traditionally, her parents opposed it): like her mother, she married a man twenty years her senior.

Clark had a good job as a machinist in the aircraft industry, and was good at it. He bet moderately on the horses at nearby Santa Anita racetrack. In a photograph taken during their early years together, Irene and Clark appear to be a happy couple, even a bit glamorous. They are leaning against a shining black sedan; Clark's crisp fedora is tipped onto the back of his head as he and his wife turn to each other with broad smiles. But the felicities were all on the surface; Irene had run headlong out of a confining upbringing into a confining marriage. She would later say that her life came to an end on her wedding day.

Prominent among Clark's restrictions was his express desire not to have any children. For one thing, they were noisy. Late in Irene's first pregnancy, five years into their marriage, Clark beat her severely. In the hospital for treatment of her injuries, Irene went into labor and gave birth to a healthy daughter. The infant's crying infuriated Clark, and she was placed in the garage, where, at the age of two and a half months, she died. Irene later protested that the girl had been put there only to spare her the noise while the linoleum was being removed from the kitchen floor, and that once in the garage she had been struck with "quick pneumonia." The likelihood is that behind the euphemism was a case of death by exposure. A subsequent infant was more literally a victim of the couple's incompatibility: it died of Rh blood poisoning soon after birth. Irene's third pregnancy produced a healthy son. He survived infancy, but his development was stifled by an approximation of the neglect that had killed his oldest sibling. He was slow to walk, and at three years of age was not yet toilet-trained, but he was saved by the intercession of his paternal grandmother, who took him in and kept him for several months, long enough to get him back on track. In April of 1957, Clark and Irene had their fourth child, a girl. She, too, had Rh blood poisoning, but she was given a transfusion soon after birth. She went on to suffer the same developmental fate as her older brother, but this time there was no paternal grandmother to rescue her at the critical moment.

Clark had an extraordinary attachment to his mother, surprising in the light of his upbringing: he had spent most of his early years in orphanages and foster homes, and few with her. She was a flamboyant woman—at one time, she had managed a brothel—and was given to travelling armed. It is said that she thought her son intolerably straitlaced. But straitlaced or not, he was slavishly devoted to her, to the point where Irene never became more than a secondary allegiance in his life. In December of 1958, Clark's mother was struck by a car and killed as she crossed the street with her grandson to buy an ice-cream cone. Clark arrived soon after the accident to find his mother's body still in the road and no sign of the vehicle that had hit her. A teenager was arrested the next day and charged with hit-and-run and drunken driving. He received a probationary sentence. The court's leniency fuelled Clark's fury. He decided that a world without his mother, a world that did not care enough to punish her murder adequately, was a world he could best do without. He quit his job and moved his family into his mother's two-bedroom house, on Golden West Avenue, where he would live out the last decade of his life as a recluse, with his family as virtual prisoners.

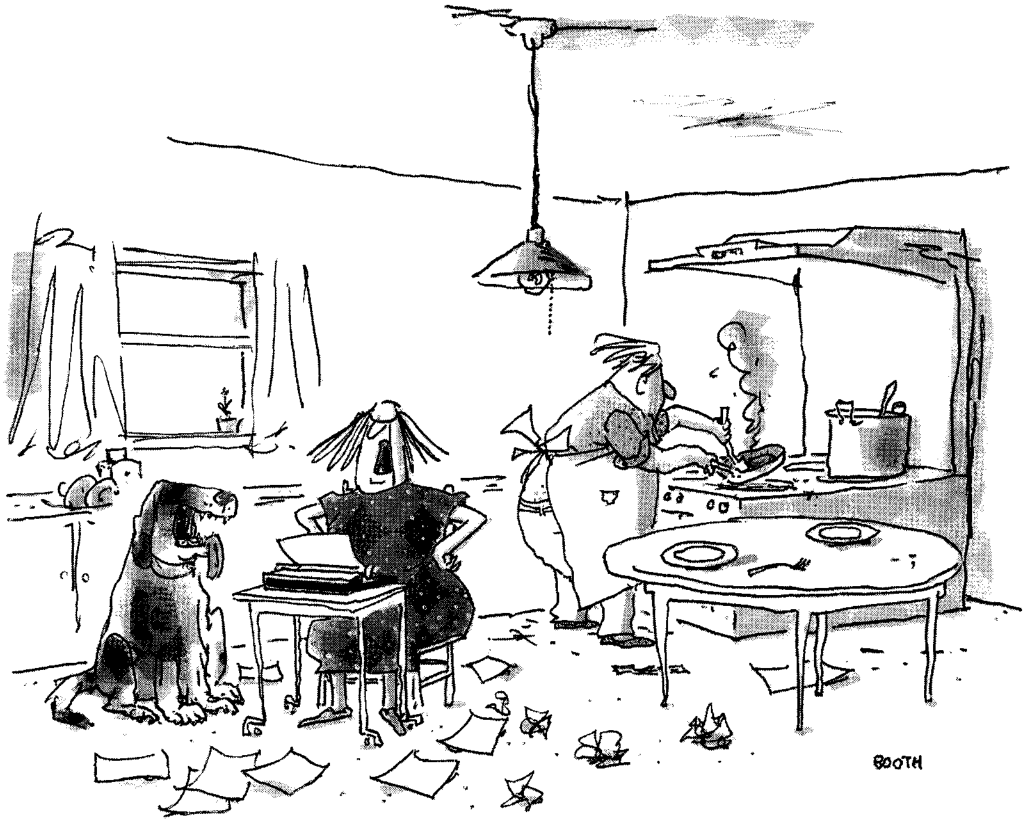
Irene's world closed in on her severely at this time. Her encroaching blindness made her almost completely dependent on her tormentor. Their son was allowed out of the house to attend school or to play with a neighbor but for little else, and within the house he was effectively a hostage. He slept on the living-room floor; his parents also slept in the living room—his mother on a couch and Clark in an easy chair in front of a defunct television set, sometimes with a gun in his lap. The main bedroom, according to some accounts, was kept as a shrine to Clark's mother. But it was the daughter—twenty months old when the family moved—who bore the brunt of Clark's renunciation. "In essence, Clark appointed himself a guardian to his family," Jay Shurley, a professor of psychiatry and behavioral science at the University of Oklahoma, who became involved with the case, explained to me recently. "His delusion was that his daughter was retarded and was going to be very vulnerable to exploitation. He dreaded the idea of people taking advantage of her."

After one of the child's rare early medical examinations, a pediatrician noted on her records that she was "slow," and pronounced her a "retarded little girl with kernicterus"—a condition that sometimes results from a botched transfusion for Rh incompatibility. "Clark amplified that to delusional intensity—that this girl was profoundly retarded," Shurley told me. "He was convinced that she would need his protection from the evil of the world, and that no one was better prepared than he to recognize its evil. He didn't reckon, of course, on his own evil. These people never do."

Clark's idea of protective custody is described in Susan Curtiss's doctoral dissertation, which was published as a book—"Genie: A Psycholinguistic Study of a Modern-Day 'Wild Child' "—in 1977, by Academic Press. In both the dissertation and the book, the girl is referred to not by her real name but by her scientific alias, Genie—the name used in the symposium papers, the psychology magazines, and the textbooks, and contrived in order to protect the child's identity. Curtiss's account agrees with that of other investigators. She wrote:

> In the house Genie was confined to a small bedroom, harnessed to an infant's potty seat. Genie's father sewed the harness, himself; unclad except for the harness, Genie was left to sit on that chair. Unable to move anything except her fingers and hands, feet and toes, Genie was left to sit, tied-up, hour after hour, often into the night, day after day, month after month, year after year. At night, when Genie was not forgotten, she was removed from her harness only to be placed into another restraining garment—a sleeping bag which her father had fashioned to hold Genie's arms stationary (allegedly to prevent her from taking it off). In effect, it was a straitjacket. Therein constrained, Genie was put into an infant's crib with wire mesh sides and a wire mesh cover overhead. Caged by night, harnessed by day, Genie was left to somehow endure the hours and years of her life.
>
> There was little for her to listen to; there was no TV or radio in the house. Genie's bedroom was in the back of the house next to [the master] bedroom and a bathroom. . . . The father had an intolerance for noise, so what little conversation there was between family members in the rest of the house was kept at a low volume. Except for moments of anger, when her father swore, Genie did not hear any language outside her door, and thus received practically no auditory stimulation of any kind, aside from bathroom noises. There were two windows in her room, and one of them was kept open several inches. She may, therefore, have occasionally heard an airplane overhead or some other traffic or environmental noises; but set in the back of the house, Genie would not have heard much noise from the street.
>
> Hungry and forgotten, Genie would sometimes attempt to attract attention by making noise. Angered, her father would often beat her for doing so. In fact, there was a large piece of wood left in the corner of Genie's room which her father used solely to beat her whenever she made any sound. Genie learned to keep silent and to suppress all vocalization. . . .
>
> Just as there was little to listen to, there was not much for Genie to touch or look at. The only pieces of furniture in her room were the crib and the potty seat. There was no carpet on the floor, no pictures on the walls. There were two windows, but they were covered up except for a few inches at the top out of which Genie could see the sky from one and the side of a neighboring house from the other. There was one dim, bare ceiling light bulb, a wall of closets, and another wall with the bedroom door. The room was a dirty salmon color. Occasionally, two plastic raincoats, one clear and one yellow, hung outside the closet in the room, and once in a while Genie was allowed to "play" with them. In addition, Genie was sometimes given "partly edited" copies of the TV log, with pictures that her father considered too suggestive removed (like women advertising swimming pools, etc.). She was also given an occasional empty cottage-cheese container, empty thread

> spools, and the like. These were Genie's toys; and together with the floor, her harness, and her body, they were her primary sources of visual and tactile stimulation.
>
> Genie's diet was equally limited. She was given baby foods, cereals, an occasional soft-boiled egg. Under pressure from the father to keep contact with Genie to a minimum, she was fed hurriedly, usually by having food stuffed into her mouth. Should Genie choke and spit out some of her food, she would have her face rubbed in it. . . .
>
> Genie's father was convinced that Genie would die. He was positive that she would not live past the age of twelve. He was so convinced of this that he promised his wife that if the child did live beyond twelve, the mother could seek help for Genie. But age twelve came and went; Genie survived, but the father reneged on his promise. The mother, too blind to even dial the phone and forbidden under threat of death to contact her own parents (who lived in the area), felt helpless to do anything.
>
> Finally, when Genie was 13½ years old, Genie's mother, after a violent argument with her husband in which she threatened to leave unless he called her parents, succeeded in getting her husband to telephone her mother. Later that day Genie's mother took Genie and left her home and her husband.



"This is definitely the last time for Chapter Seventeen!"

Curtiss went on to relate the girl's discovery: how she was taken into custody by the police; how the parents were arrested and charged with child abuse; how the child was admitted to the hospital. The family history is wrapped up, like Little Dorrit's, with a breath of exultation: "She had been discovered, at last."

But the real epitaph to the era was written by Clark himself. On the morning of November 20, 1970—the morning that he and his wife were to appear in court on charges of willful abuse or injury to the person or health of a minor—he spread out a blanket and a sheet of cellophane on the living-room floor and shot himself through the right temple with a .38-calibre revolver. He was seventy years old. He left two notes, scrawled with a ballpoint pen. One was for the police and read, in part, "My son . . . is out in front with friends. He hasn't the slightest idea of what is going to happen." The second was to his son, and included these instructions:

> Don't take that shirt back. It's for my funeral. You know where my blue shirt is. Underwear in hall closet. . . . I love you. Goodbye and be good.
>
> —Dad

Clark did not leave a note for his wife or his daughter, but he did include in his farewells a sentence that seemed addressed to the public at large: to the press that had exposed his family's disarray; to the people in the automobiles, whose finger-pointing parade had distressed him tremendously; to the scientists and doctors who had taken his daughter and renamed her. He wrote, "The world will never understand."

Already in court that morning, Irene had heard her counsel enter a plea of not guilty, on the ground that she had been forced into her role by an abusive husband. Then the judge received a message and summoned the lawyers into chambers. Irene's counsel returned to tell her that her husband was dead. She was visibly shaken, the lawyer later recalled, but did not break down. "She just sat there, silent," he said. Her plea was accepted.

The suicide—reported, like the parents' arrest, on network news—did nothing to lessen interest in the case. The press had set up camp on the lawn of Childrens Hospital, where Genie was now residing. Childrens was, and is, one of the most prominent, expensive, and up-to-date pediatric facilities on the West Coast, and one accustomed to security concerns, since among its clientele are a number of the children of Hollywood celebrities. Freed from her little room and placed in the most competent of professional hands, Genie was, in the view of the doctors and psychologists and others who were now becoming involved with her progress, liberated. If such a thing was possible, she was to be given a chance at a new life, with new surroundings, a new future—even a new mission—to go along with her new name.

By the summer of 1988, when Susan Curtiss and I first met, Curtiss had become an associate professor of linguistics at U.C.L.A. She was sharing a small office in Campbell Hall with two of her graduate students. Her desk was crammed into a far corner of the room, and over it were several pictures, tacked to an orange room divider. There were photographs of her two daughters, aged five and one, and there was a drawing of Curtiss herself, done by Genie almost fifteen years earlier. The drawing was a stick figure, made with a series of quick

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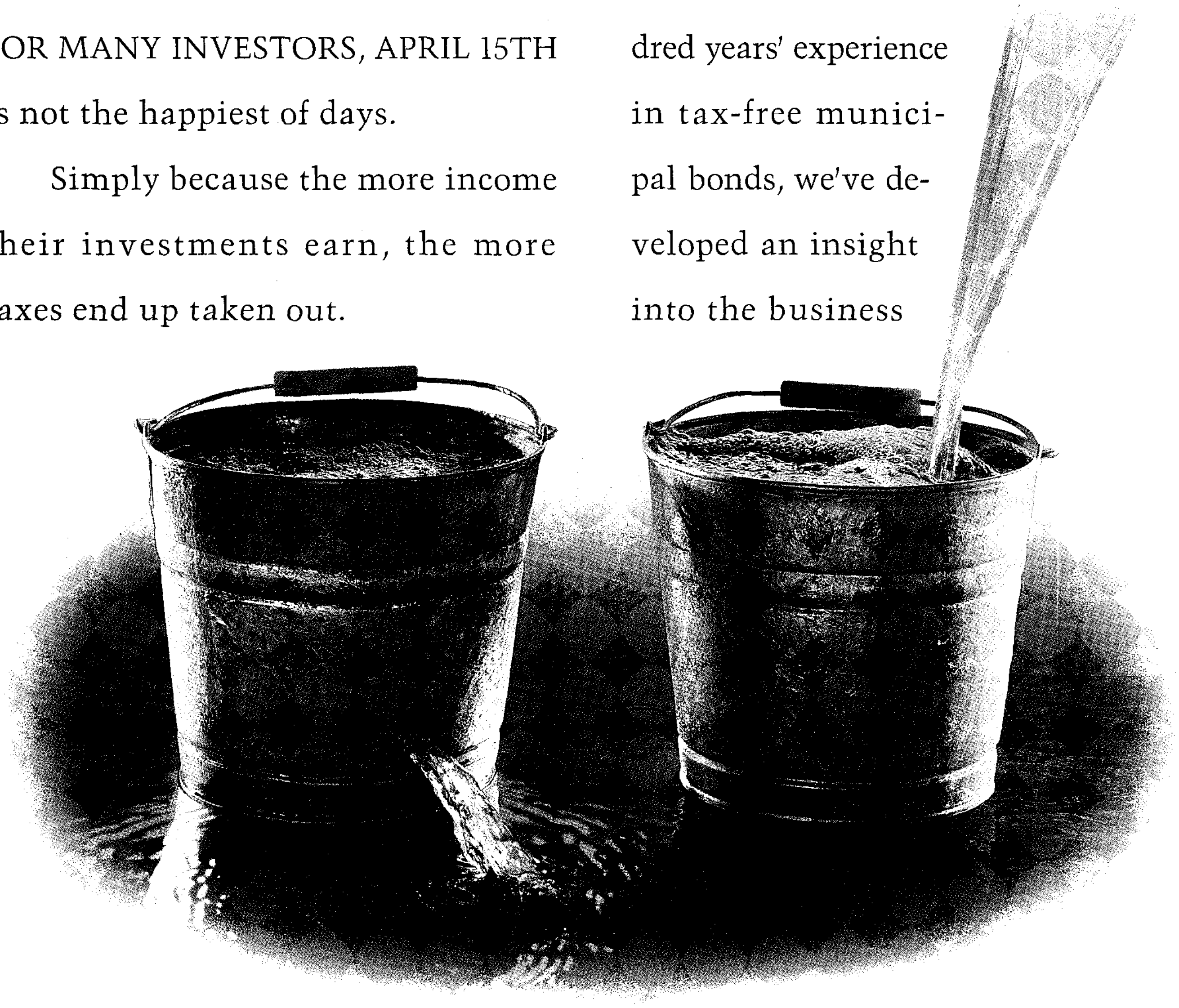

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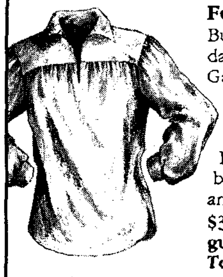

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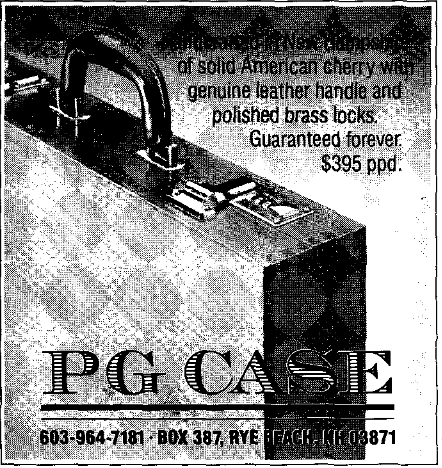

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crayon strokes. It wasn't easy to decide whether the rendering was immature for an artist in her middle teens or, in a primitivist way, accomplished, for its portrayal of its subject was accurate: Curtiss is painfully thin, and as nervous as summer lightning. She is also extraordinarily focussed, in the iron-clad manner of one who has long done battle with the hectoring distractions of the academic world.

In 1971, when Genie entered her life, Curtiss was twenty-two years old and a first-year graduate student in the Linguistics Department. "I was one of the few linguists on campus studying language acquisition in children," she told me. "It seemed to me that once we came to understand language acquisition, we would have answers to most of the central questions of linguistics. Besides, I love children. It seemed as if it would be fun to have them be my source of data."

Her interests had put her in the right place at the right time. She remembers the spring afternoon when she was summoned into the office of her faculty adviser, Victoria Fromkin. Fromkin, who is now a professor emeritus, began discussing developments in a case of an abused and linguistically deprived child. Curtiss had already heard of the case, but now she was being invited in on the ground floor. "As a new student, I found myself presented with an opportunity that changed my life in every way," she told me. "Personally as well as academically. Because the case is an important one, it shaped my future research, right down to today. I was just starting on the core curriculum then. I hadn't been exposed to many of the issues that Genie presented to me. I wasn't even aware of the critical-period hypothesis."

In 1971, the science of linguistics was perplexing to some of its old hands as well. The critical-period hypothesis—the idea that there are certain distinct periods in a person's development during which skills like a first language can be learned—was just one of a host of new contentions. As the questions changed rapidly, there was also a shift in who was asking them. Curtiss's field—the acquisition of language by children—had previously been the carefully guarded purview of psychology departments. Linguistics is arguably the most hotly contested property in the academic realm. It is soaked with the blood of poets, theologians, philosophers, philologists, psychologists, biologists, and neurologists, along with whatever blood can be got out of grammarians. Each discipline has at one time or another set its flag in the territory, knowing that its internal orthodoxies would be partly determined by whoever owned the language question. Susan Curtiss was in the vanguard of the newest of a hundred raiding parties.

Until the High Renaissance, European philosophers had related the language question, along with most other questions, to the Bible. Then Descartes made a heretical attempt to prove the complete independence of the soul from the body, and thereby helped to establish the science of biology. There was impressive historical testimony in favor of including language in this new, naturalist science. In the third century B.C., Epicurus, the first Greek philosopher to address the origins of language, felt that it was the creation not of God or of man's intellect but of a far less interested party: nature. Language, he said, was a biological function, like vision or digestion. But his view was anathema to the tenor of later times, when language was considered an integral part—perhaps the keystone—of man's soul, or (less likely) man's reason. Or both: in the late seventeenth century, Leibniz proclaimed language ability to be a gift of God, with its form of expression determined by natural instinct—except for Chinese, which, he suggested, was the invention of a wise man. Thus linguistics was left standing with one foot on the theological dock and the other in the naturalist boat.

The discomfort was relieved somewhat by the rise of the social sciences, at the end of the eighteenth century. If language was somewhere between theology and biology, then perchance it could be considered a problem for anthropologists, with linguists playing a backup role. The voyages of exploration and colonization had shaped the public imagination the way the Crusades had in earlier times, but with a more utilitarian grail. Comparative linguists quit worrying about the questions of the Vulgate text and got busy cataloguing new languages. But by the late nineteenth century the bulk of the questions concerning the relationship of language and man had disappeared into psychology—a discipline that the questions helped create. And that's where they stayed until the Event—the publication of Noam Chomsky's "Syntactic Structures," in 1957, the year of Genie's birth.

The galvanic effect of Chomsky's innovation was described to me by Catherine Snow, a professor of human development and psychology at Harvard University. "There was a barrenness in the study of language acquisition through the nineteen-forties and most of the fifties," she said. "Until 1957, linguists believed that all there was to think about was vocabulary. Then Chomsky made syntax central, and for the first time the questions became compelling, interesting. It was like driving across a prairie and all of a sudden seeing the Rocky Mountains jump out at you."

Chomsky and his adherents found that the complex variety of syntactic structures within a language could be distilled into a small set of core principles. Though the grammars of different languages differ widely, the principles applied equally to all. This suggested an astounding unity: according to Chomsky, sentences of diverse languages—of Japanese, with its inverted phrases; of Finnish, which expresses cases the way Latin does; of Lithuanian, among modern languages the one closest to Sanskrit; of Spanish, in which the subject of a sentence is commonly omitted—are not fundamentally different from English sentences. Some linguists have speculated, basing their hypothesis chiefly on similarities of vocabulary and pronunciation, that all languages derived from a common ancestor. Chomsky doesn't think so. On the syntactical level that Chomsky is concerned with, languages don't just have similarities—they are identical. The source of such uniformity, Chomsky argues, must be sought closer to home than an ancient protolanguage. It must be contained within us—within the species. The rules of language are either the product of an unparalleled achievement of human cognition or ingrained on a level more basic than thought. The question is no longer "How is language designed?" but "How does language reflect the way we are designed?"

The pervasiveness of Chomsky's

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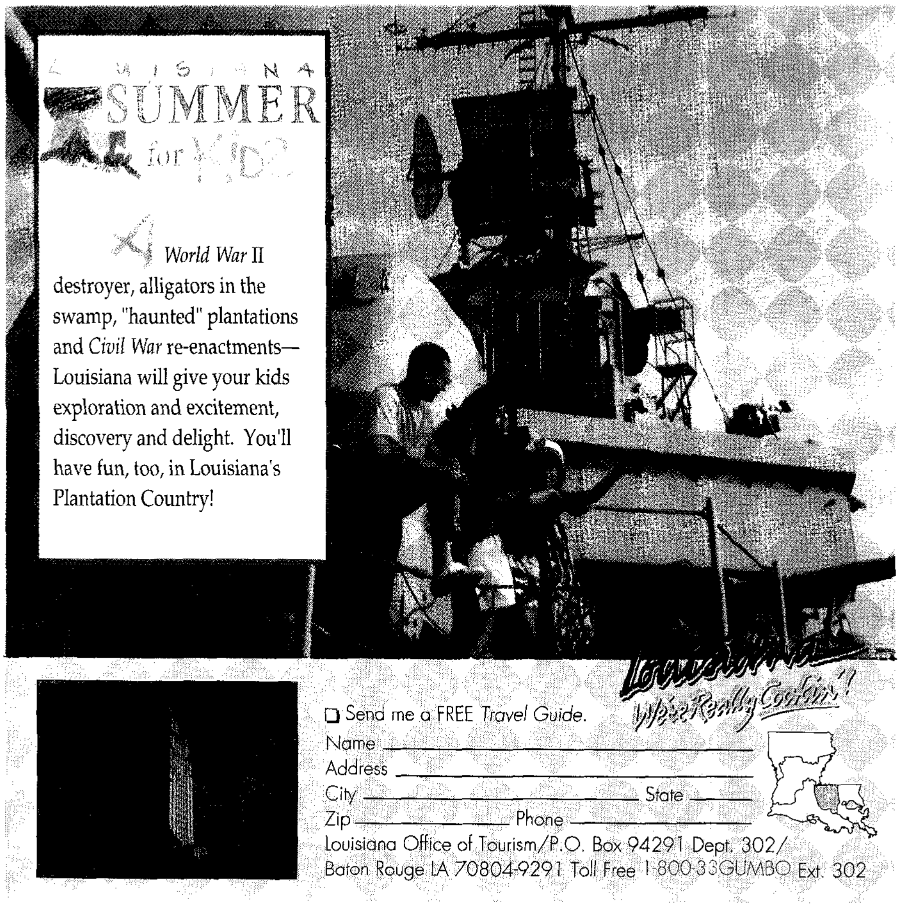

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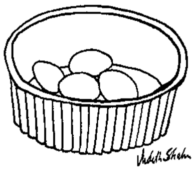
influence on modern linguistics has brought him detractors as well as disciples. Every working linguist carries, involuntarily and sometimes unfairly, a vest-pocket vita summarizing his life's work as "pro-Chomskian" or "anti-Chomskian." There are those who object to Chomsky because of his prominence in the field, and those who object to his prominence out of it, in endeavors such as politics and philosophy. But most of the contention centers on theory. The school of linguistics associated with his ideas—a school described, variously, as "nativist," "generative," "innatist," and "rationalist"—quickly met with heated opposition from the school of "environmentalists" or "empiricists," who hold that a child learns language from its interaction with the world and from the speech of its parents. Both schools have since fragmented, and their ideas and observations have mingled over the years, and these days the contest looks decidedly esoteric from the outside. "I love the pro- and anti-Chomsky debate," the filmmaker Gene Searchinger told me not long ago. "It reminds me of the joke where the guy says, 'I don't like So-and-So. He's a Communist.' And the other guy says, 'He's not a Communist, he's an anti-Communist.' And the first guy says, 'I don't care what kind of a Communist he is, I still don't like him.' Truth is, most of these people are operating on Chomskian precepts, even when they disagree with him on the details." Searchinger has spent the last five or six years making a series of films about linguistics—a project so extensive that it seems to some people as though the language question were now being taken over by filmmakers.



Since the mid-nineteen-fifties, Chomsky has taught at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. I caught up with him there one day, in a steeply pitched lecture hall—a kind of theatre, whose orchestra pit was lined with movable blackboards. He was sitting in the front row, speaking into one of Gene Searchinger's movie cameras. "Recently, this rather common auditorium was filled with many young linguists debating the central issues of the science," he said. "Thirty years ago, the number of people who could even have conceived of these questions was virtually nil."

Searchinger yelled "Cut!" and the camera went dead. Chomsky, a shy matchstick of a man, crumpled back into his chair and began chatting with Searchinger while the crew adjusted the lights. Searchinger had the appearance of a stockbroker on two telephones.

Grip (to Searchinger, yelling): "Is that good?"

Searchinger: "Yes. No. Move it up."

Chomsky (to Searchinger): "What's more sacrilegious than religion?" (Grip raises lights.)

Cameraman (to Searchinger): "The chair back is lit. Is that what you want?"

Searchinger: "That's O.K."

Chomsky (to Searchinger): ". . . but perfection? There's no such thing, unless you're religious."

Cameraman (to Searchinger): "He's got a halo. Is that O.K.?"

Searchinger: "That's O.K., too."

Finally, Searchinger said "Sticks," a slate marked "Take 5" was held in front of Chomsky's face and snapped shut, and Chomsky returned to the subject of his life's work and Searchinger's film.

"Language is a tool," he said. "The tool has no limits—in the sense that we commonly create and understand sentences that we have never heard before. How do we do it? Language is like a hammer: it can be used in many ways, and what it does depends on the person using it. Nevertheless, it is a system with a structure. Anything with structure has to have limits. It must; otherwise, it wouldn't work. If a hammer were an amorphous blob, it would not be useful.

"The problem arises when you look carefully at that structure—when you start to take language seriously. . . . If you have succeeded in finding some structure, you've just begun. You're ready to ask new questions of the world. There was a basic assumption of the study of language and human behavior in the nineteen-fifties—that we should concentrate on what people do and produce. There is a major new perspective: a shift in focus to the inner mechanisms of mind that account for behaviors. What are the inner mechanisms?

"Now, I'm enough of a materialist to think that language is in the brain. If you cut off someone's foot, he can still speak. In fact, it is useful to think of language as an organ of the mind.

The brain is like every other system in the biological world: it has specialized structures with specialized functions, and language is one of these. But did we invent language because we were sentient? No more than we invented our circulatory system. What seems to be true about language is that its basic design is in the genes. The genes determine the structure and design of language. As far as we know, it is plausible to say that there is no variation in the computational system—in the principles that determine the organization of the series of noises that makes sense to us. All this happens in a very rigid manner, as rigid as the computation in your personal computer."

"No, no," Searchinger objected. "Would you start that again? It sounds too wordy."

Chomsky looked momentarily baffled.

"It's comparable to walking," Searchinger prompted him.

"Well, take, for example, the facility of walking," Chomsky went on. "If a child is raised by a bird, does he end up flying? No. Or if a dog is raised by a person, does it end up walking on its hind legs? No. That we are designed to walk is uncontroversial. That we are taught to walk is highly implausible."

Listening to the explanation unfold, I was reminded of why different disciplines have wished so fervently to keep hold of the language question: it is a hard one to divide up and share. Chomsky started out talking about language, and pretty soon he was talking about the nature of man. He had already gored a sacred precept: motherhood. According to Chomsky's innatists, children weren't learning language from their mothers, or from anyone else in their environment. They were bringing language with them.

The contention affronted common sense, and though it is now widely accepted it still draws fire. "The innatists think that language is acquired very fast, very easily, and that it's very much the child's responsibility," Catherine Snow, who considers herself a non-Chomskian, explained to me. "They also see language as one large problem. We on the other side think that learning language is a long slog, which requires from the child a lot of work. And the child is working as hard as he can, fifteen, sixteen hours a day. We think it requires a relationship with an adult, and a whole set of cognitive abilities. We also think that the child is refining one little bit of the language system at a time. People who are inclined to fall back on innatist explanations are falling back on a metaphor. It's an exciting metaphor. The image that transfixed them was that of the child as linguist: in his every utterance, he is the perfect speaker of an exotic, weird language. But even the most rabid innatist cannot point to a gene or a cell for language. And even the most rabid environmentalist must concede that language doesn't get learned by every species, and that if too much of the brain is missing you won't learn language. The solution lies somewhere in the middle. The problem is taking it out of the realm of mystery. The Princeton psycholinguist George Miller said, 'The trouble with language acquisition is that the nativists have proved that it's a mystery and the environmentalists have proved that it's impossible.' "

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In the M.I.T. lecture hall, Noam Chomsky and Gene Searchinger were finding it impossible to proceed with the filming: a scheduled class was arriving, and a professor had come in and nodded timidly in Chomsky's direction before turning and writing "Developing Amphibian Oöcytes" on the blackboard.

"Suppose that a child hears no language at all," Chomsky was saying. "There are two possibilities: he can have no language, or he can invent a new one. If you were to put prelinguistic children on an island, the chances are good that their language facility would soon produce a language. Maybe not in the first generation. And that when they did so, it would resemble the languages we know. You can't do the experiment, because you can't subject a child to that experience."

The lights flashed off, and the film crew began hurriedly packing up cables and microphones. "Of course," Chomsky commented to Searchinger as the two pushed against an incoming tide of undergraduates and headed for the M.I.T. quad, "there are natural experiments."

THE luck that befell Susan Curtiss when she was invited into the Genie case by Victoria Fromkin was greater than she at first knew, for the competition for access to Genie was fierce. Even by early May of 1971, six months after the girl's discovery, there was no assurance that any linguists would be included among her scientific observers. And the scientists weren't the only ones trying to gain entry. "Immediately, there was such interest in Genie, such publicity," Howard Hansen, who was then the head of the Psychiatry Division of Childrens Hospital, told me. "We had calls from all over the world—press, doctors, do-gooders, kooks. We tried for anonymity. But we had to keep her in the hospital. She was a ward of the court at that point. If we had discharged her, she would have gone to Juvenile Hall, and that would not have been right. So David got active on a research design, and we put together a little money."

"David" was David Rigler, a professor of pediatrics and psychology at the University of Southern California and the chief psychologist in the hospital's Psychiatry Division. He had been with Childrens a year, having worked previously as an evaluator of grant applications for the National Institute of Mental Health, in Bethesda, Maryland. His experience proved useful in helping the hospital secure initial funding for research on Genie from two foundations and, in February of 1971, a contract with the N.I.M.H. itself for twenty-one thousand five hundred dollars. The N.I.M.H. contract would run until the following September, during which time a number of consultants were to be invited in for preliminary research and a conference was to be mounted to debate long-range plans. Hansen and Rigler acted as gatekeepers for the process, with help from another hospital psychologist, James Kent. Kent's presence, especially, seemed to bode well for Genie. He was an authority on child abuse—a phenomenon all too familiar now but not often acknowledged twenty years ago—and in 1972 he would be appointed to a White House commission studying the problem.

Kent was the doctor originally in charge of following Genie's case. "I was supposed to give Genie therapy," he recalls. "But mostly that entailed watching her improvement, documenting her progress. I became more her

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Boswell than her therapist." The day after her admission to Childrens Hospital, he paid her a visit. She had arrived in diapers, and was having them changed when he walked in. When she had been successfully outfitted in a new set of pajamas, she got out of bed and shuffled toward him, apparently attracted by what he had brought with him: a magazine, drawing paper, crayons, and a Denver kit—a set of toys used to gauge the developmental level of young children. He was amazed at the skill with which she flipped through the magazine. It seemed that all her dexterity was in her fingertips, for tests had shown her to have, in general, the motor skills of a two-year-old. As Kent removed items from the Denver kit—a bell, a block, a small doll—she took each one and held it momentarily to her cheek but then laid it aside. She made good eye contact with him, seemed very curious about her environment, and was attentive to sounds, moving about the room to determine the source of each. This Kent found promising. But his overall assessment was bleak. "As far as I'm concerned, Genie was the most profoundly damaged child I've ever seen," he told me. "There has been nothing in other cases to approach it. It was orders of magnitude worse. Genie's life was a wasteland."

The question for Kent—and, eventually, for Susan Curtiss—was what this damage meant for Genie's emotional and intellectual state. Because she couldn't talk, testing her intellect was almost impossible. But she was expressive of emotion: Kent noticed her fear when he pulled a puppet from the Denver kit. Genie started, yanked the puppet from his hand, and threw it on the floor. Kent feigned a horrified concern and said, "We have to get him back." To his astonishment, the child repeated the word "back" and gave a shrill, nervous laugh. Encouraged, Kent began a slapstick pantomime, picking up the puppet and letting Genie throw it again, which she did with bursts of laughter. She was playing, and was quick to enjoy his reciprocating play.

She showed little beyond this, and Kent reported in a 1972 symposium paper that "apart from the peculiar laugh, frustration was the only other clear affective behavior we could discern." The frustration was just as peculiar. She would scowl, tear paper, or scratch objects with her fingernails. When she was very angry, she would scratch her face, blow her nose violently into her clothes, and urinate. But she would not make a sound, and she would not turn her anger outward, toward another person. Her usual comportment, Kent noted, was a "sombre detachment." If not deliberately engaged, she drifted around in her new physical world, walking with bent elbows in her strange "bunny walk," spitting into her clothing or into a curtain hem, far more aware of the room than of the people in it. In fact, she seemed hardly able to differentiate between various visitors. Some observers referred to her as "ghostlike."

Among the first of the consultants to fly in was Jay Shurley. "That first trip, I paid my own way," he recalled. "I spent a week with her, examining her clinically. I determined for myself that she was the genuine article—that she had suffered the most extreme long-duration social isolation of any child that had been described in any literature I could find."

Shurley had sent the bulk of his luggage overland—six hundred pounds of state-of-the-art equipment for investigating brain activity. For three nights running, on three of his early visits, he wired Genie to an array of meters, measuring her brain waves while she slept, looking for any anomalies that would imply abnormal brain development. "Genie was about the richest source of information you can imagine," he said. "I responded to this, because I'm an investigator on a fundamental level. There were all kinds of questions that I felt she might shed some light on. Naturalistic cases of intense isolation don't come along often—not with a period of isolation as extensive as that."

Shurley had a charter interest in the isolation question; he had grown up unusual, in a hardscrabble Texas farm family. "I was a black sheep," he told me. "My family are all ranchers. I'm the first one that wanted to go to college and become an academic." After graduating from the University of Texas Medical Branch, at Galveston, Shurley went to Pennsylvania Hospital, in Philadelphia, for his psychiatric training. After a brief stint of private practice in Austin, he was drafted into the Army, where he taught psychiatrists who were accompanying the troops to Korea. After this tour of duty, he became the chief of the Adult Psychiatric Branch of the N.I.M.H.; there he spent his off-hours helping to develop the warm-water sensory-deprivation chambers that eventually made their way from science to parapsychology. Through the late nineteen-fifties and early nineteen-sixties, first at the N.I.M.H. and then at the Veterans Administration hospital in Oklahoma City, he used the tanks to experiment on himself, floating in their null environment until he experienced the

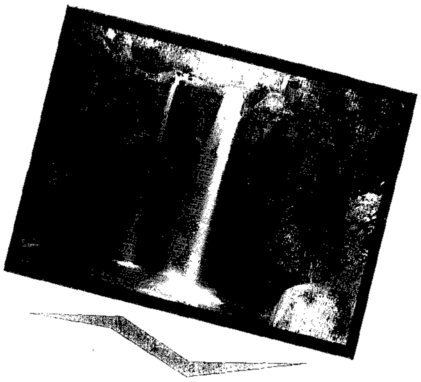
---

THE SKELETON OF A TROUT IN SHALLOW WATER

wedged between two stones
near the bank of a rushing stream
startled the old man with the shock
of white hair who uncovered it
while stooping to pick watercress.
For a long time he examined the skeleton—
skull, ribs, and spine polished clean—
before dislodging it with his cane
and watching it spin away
into the fast current
and disappear through the shadows
of the overhanging trees.
Then, with the sun beating down
on his head and bleaching
the fields that stretched away
to the mountains, he released
the dripping clump of watercress
he had been clutching all that time
and watched it float away, too,
dark and tangled in the clear water.

—Nicholas Christopher

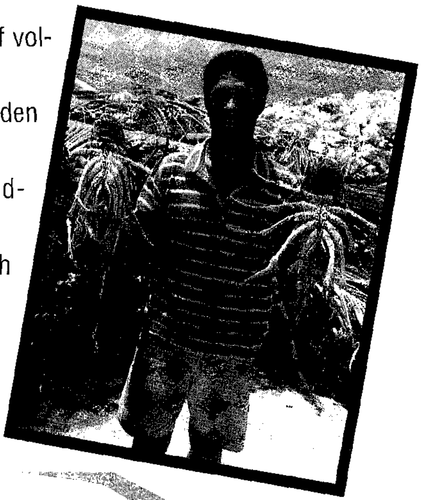
• •



ECOTROPICA

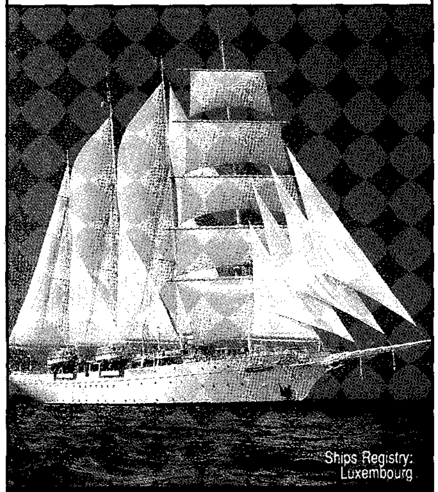
an environmentalist's guide to the Caribbean

Islands sparkling like diamonds in a sapphire sea, gentle trade winds cooling the heat of a tropical sun, pink, gold, and alabaster beaches edged by warm aquamarine waters — that's one aspect of the Caribbean, beckoning to the weary and winter-wan, tempting them with the prospect of an indolent respite in a [illegible] Eden. But there's another side to the region, too, a wild, unspoiled beauty that Columbus found when he made his first landfall. It still exists today in the Ecotropics, the Caribbean of volcanoes and rain forests, coral gardens and hidden waterfalls, hot sulfur springs, rugged, cloud-shrouded mountain peaks, boiling lakes, lush woodlands, flower-filled ravines, swamps, deserts, and rare creatures of the sea and sky.



Photos by Oliver Benn, Norbert Wu, Nicholas Parfitt/Tony Stone Worldwide

INHERIT THE WIND



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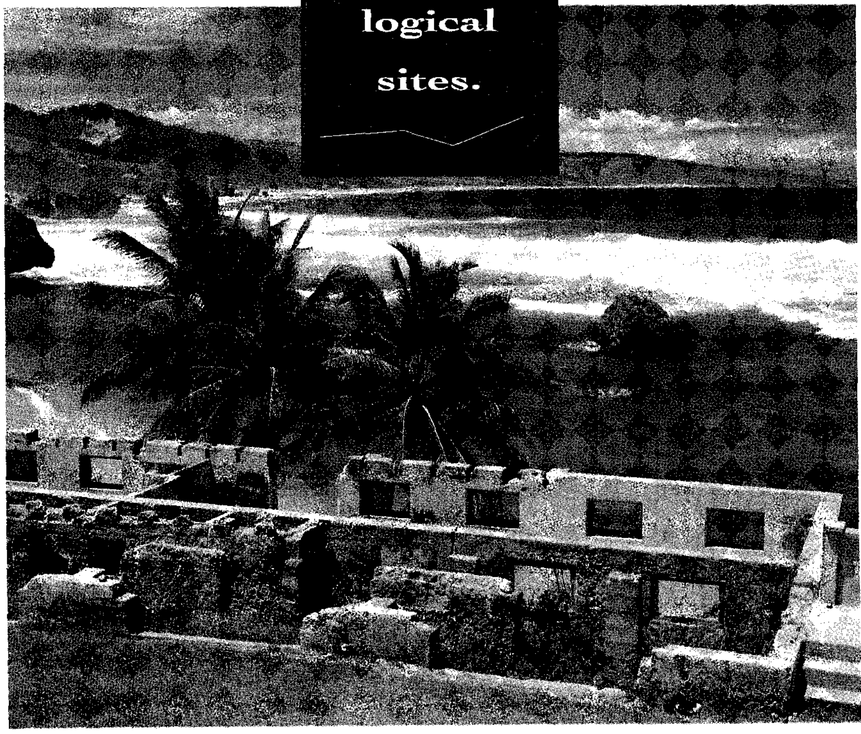
The largest underwater cave system in the world — over five miles long, in the Bahamas' Lucayan National Park — is under the protection of the Bahamas National Trust. In the Cayman Islands the endangered iguana is as important to the Cayman National Trust as its splendid reefs and abundant marine life. The only tropical rain forest in the United States, El Yunque in Puerto Rico, is being vigorously preserved by the National Park Service. There is a new realization that the flamingos of Bonaire, the frigate birds of St. Lucia, the archeological sites of Anguilla's Fountain National Park and Aruba's Arikok National Park, the Animal Flower Cave of Barbados, the ancient relics beneath Saba's waters, the *landhuisen* Dutch plantation houses of Curaçao, and the Indian ceremonial parks of Jamaica are as important for tourism as the pink and white sands of Antigua and St. Thomas, the elegant hotels of Jamaica and St. Bart's, the dive resorts of the Cayman Islands, and the splendid yachts, sailboats, and cruise ships that ply the waters around and between them.

Yachtsmen who charter boats in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Antigua, and the British Virgin Islands know the beautiful anchorages and fine shore facilities of these islands as well as they know the wind, weather, and sea. Lately, in established as well as remote and rarely visited yacht havens, they're encountering antipollution measures and a host of other regulations governing mooring and dumping.

Fishing enthusiasts who've seen unchecked development erode promising areas in other parts of the hemisphere are cheerfully accepting limits on where, how, and when some fish may be boated. Coöperating with international conventions on drift netting and endangered species protection, the island nations of the Caribbean are ensuring the future of this precious sea and of the teeming schools of tropical beauties that delight snorkelers, divers, and underwater photographers.

> **Those in search of the past will find it in archeological sites.**



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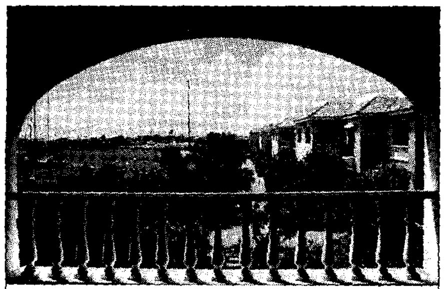

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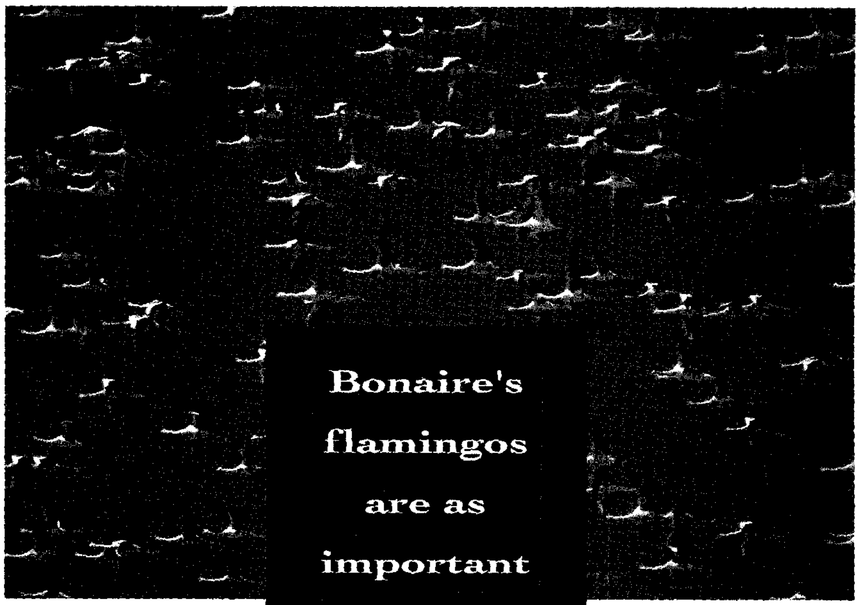


Mitch Reardon/Tony Stone Worldwide

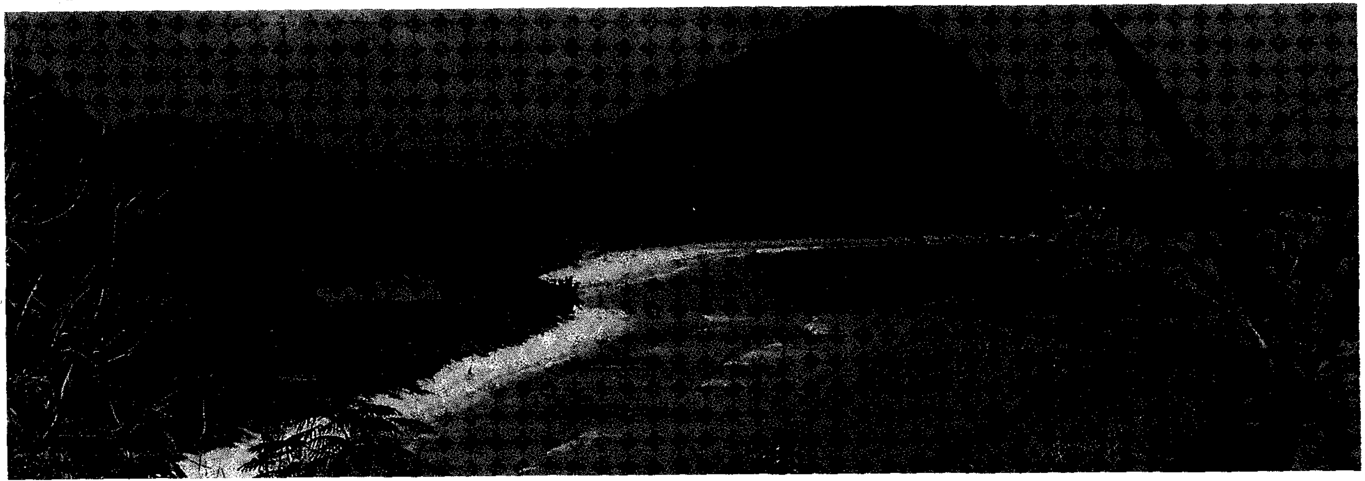
Bonaire's flamingos are as important as the pink and white sands of the islands.

The Ecotropics beckon the most active travellers with wide-ranging options in outdoor pleasures. Climbers can find a mountain to match the level of their skills: Pico Duarte in the Dominican Republic, Jamaica's Blue Mountain Peak, Dominica's Morne Diablotin, Puerto Rico's Cerro de Punta, or Saba's Mount Scenery. Hikers and trekkers find equally varied trails, requiring differing levels of skill and endurance, throughout the region. Jamaica's Blue Mountains and Hellshire Hills, Dominica's Middleham Trails, Trafalgar Falls, and Boiling Lake, St. Eustatius's Quill, St. Croix's Rain Forest Park, the Cordillera Central of the Dominican Republic, and the Soufrière Hills of Montserrat are among the most popular. And there's a real welcome being extended to campers in the Virgin Islands, Jamaica, Dominica, Trinidad, and Martinique. On many islands local hiking, climbing, and camping groups offer assistance in finding guides, supplies, and even companions.

For those who want less arduous but equally rewarding outdoor pleasures, there's plenty to do besides lounge on the beach. Day hikers can climb the 1,064 handhewn steps from Windwardside to Mount Scenery on Saba or picnic by Grenada's Grand Etang. Cyclists can bike the Parc Naturel route in Guadeloupe or participate in the Round the Island Tour on St. Martin. Surfers head for the steep Atlantic rollers off Antigua's Half Moon Bay or Trinidad's Salibia Bay. Spelunkers explore the caves of Puerto Rico, Anguilla, Barbados, Aruba, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago. Equestrian enthusiasts come to Aruba to ride horses descended from those imported decades ago from South America, to St. Kitts for miles of trails and excellent riding facilities, and to Jamaica for horseback treks through working sugar and banana plantations.

Scuba divers from all over the world have always known about the Cayman Islands, Bonaire, and the British Virgins, with their coral-encrusted reefs, rich and varied marine life, and crystalline waters. But other islands less well known for the excellence of underwater sites, the variety of wrecks, and the limitless visibility of local waters have begun establishing

DISCOVER NATURE'S LITTLE SECRETS



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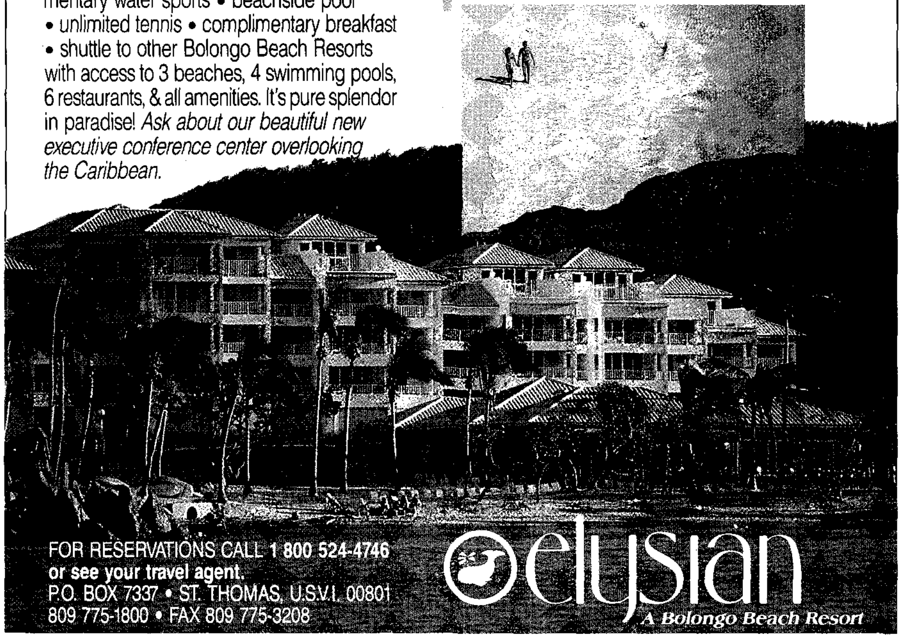

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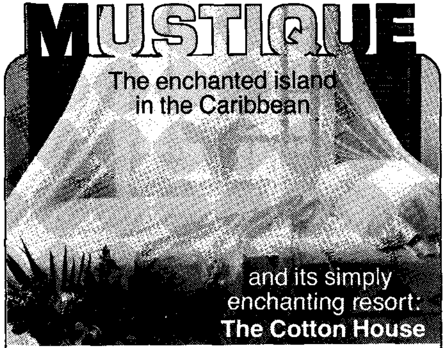

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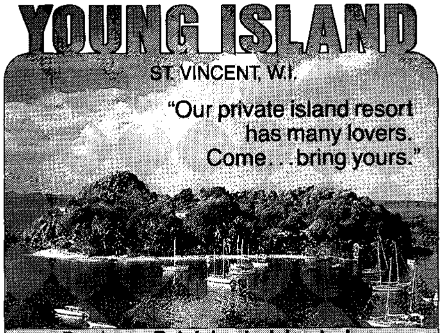

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marine parks and dive facilities, too. There are plenty of new options for Caribbean-bound divers who think they've seen it all — Curaçao, the Turks and Caicos, the Family Islands of the Bahamas, Saba and St. Eustatius, Antigua and Barbuda, and Trinidad and Tobago among them.

For those who don't dive but do swim, the clear waters of the Caribbean offer an introduction that's safe, easy, and can be enjoyed by people of all ages. Snorkeling in beautiful lagoons in Antigua, Martinique, Virgin Gorda, and the U.S. Virgin Islands of St. Croix and St. John provides a close-up look at the varied marine life and lush coral gardens of the region; many snorkelers eager for an even closer look discover how easy it is to learn to scuba everywhere in the islands. Die-hard beachcombers find treasures tossed up by the waves on the Atlantic side of many islands.

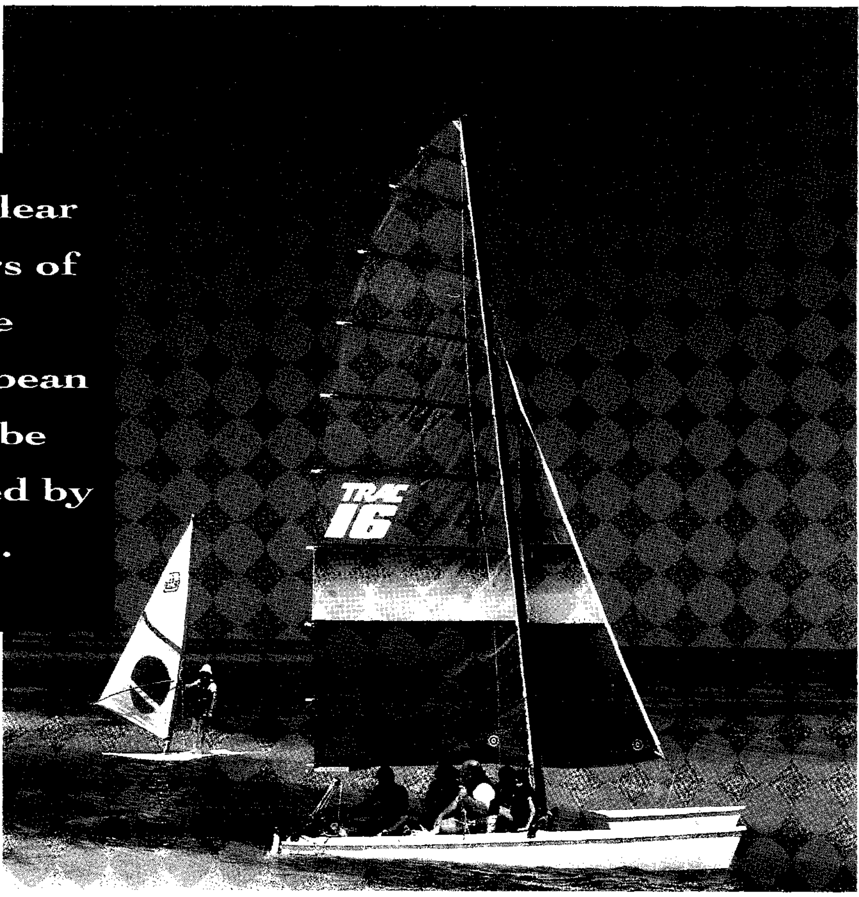
Even dedicated trekkers, climbers, and hikers think of the beach first when they think of the Ecotropics, and there are so many spectacular stretches of pink, white, golden, even black volcanic sand that it's hard to pinpoint the best in class. But surely the thirty-two miles of Anguilla's coastline would be among them, as would be the shores of Antigua and Barbuda, the idyllic powdery edges of Tobago, Puerto Rico's secluded Culebra Island, and Magen's Bay in St. Thomas.

For the less active but still environment-conscious traveller, the Ecotropics is home to thousands of rare and beautiful creatures, plants, and flowers. Many can be seen and enjoyed in nature preserves, bird sanctuaries, and splendid public and private gardens. There's whale watching during the annual spring and fall migrations off Anguilla, St. Bart's, and the Dominican Republic; flamingo reserves in Bonaire and the Bahamas; frigate bird colonies in St. Lucia, Barbuda, and the British

Virgins; imperial parrots in Dominica; hawksbill turtle preserves in Barbuda; crocodile sanctuaries in the Dominican Republic; and osprey and sea turtle nesting grounds in the Turks and Caicos.

The gardens of the Caribbean boast every native plant and flower species, and many imported from other continents and cultivated in the lush, clement islands. Outstanding among them are the orchids collected in the Andromeda Gardens of Barbados, St. Croix's St. George Botanical Gardens, and the Montreal Gardens of St. Vincent. The Gingerland plantations of Nevis, the botanic gardens of Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, and Le Jardin de Balata in Martinique are notable for the variety of flowers, trees, and plants

The clear waters of the Caribbean can be enjoyed by all.



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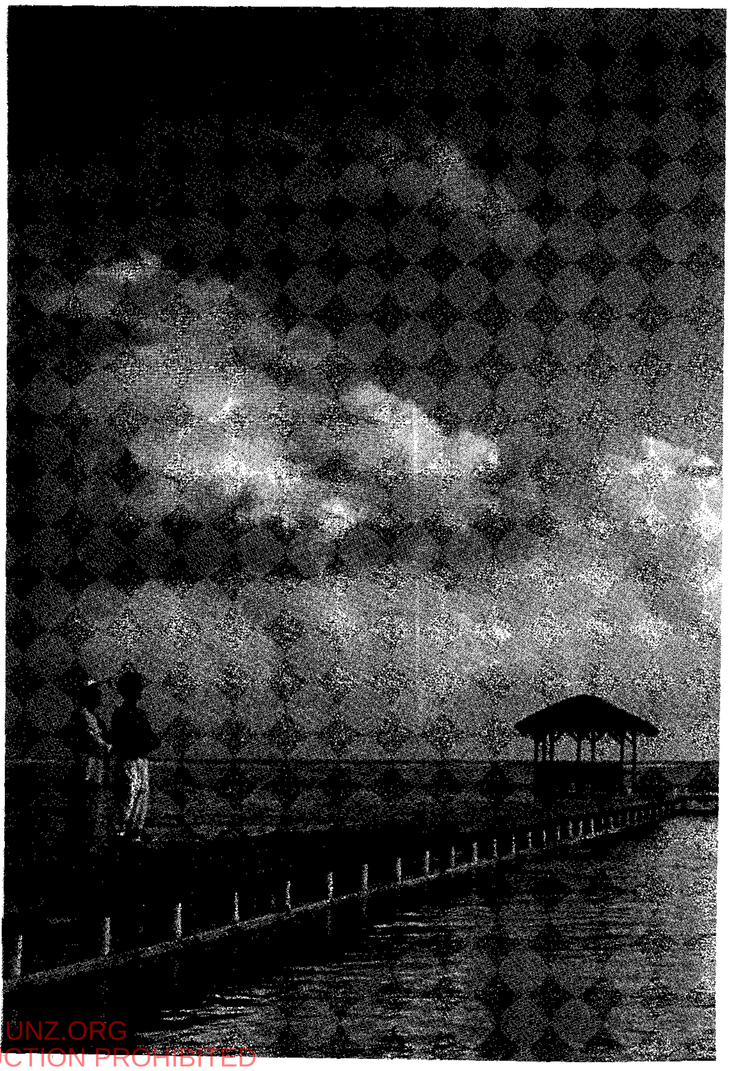

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under cultivation. But everywhere in the Ecotropics there are the fragrant blooms of hibiscus, orchids growing from tree trunks, and the divi-divi tree, whose characteristic leaves are shaped like elephant ears and whose dramatic contours are sculpted into otherworldly shapes by the omnipresent trade winds.

Those in search of the past will find it in Arawak, Carib, and Amerindian archeological sites. There are petroglyphs throughout the islands, and tools, pottery shards, and artifacts preserved in local museums and historical societies. Throughout the area there are reminders of the rich ethnic heritage of the Caribbean, in the Creole culture that exists everywhere and also in curious little villages that reflect the background of Europeans who settled them. There are shamrocks and blarney stones and even soda bread in some restaurants in Montserrat. On St. Barthélemy, women still wear the stiff, starched bonnets and long dresses of Normandy. Deep in the Jamaican interior, Maroons drum ancient rhythms. Papiamento, a local dialect of Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao, owes as much to its Dutch antecedents as it does to the influence of the Spanish. In the French West Indies, you can dine on cuisine that Parisians would be proud of, or celebrate Bastille Day with a Gallic flavor. The Spanish colonial heritage of Puerto Rico is strong in historic San Juan and colonial Santo Domingo.

Finally, and eternally, there are those travellers whose idea of environmental vacationing is bargain hunting for local crafts, and carting them home along with memories and photographs. There are the famous Larania straw hats of St. Bart's, new issues of stamps from Nevis, the colorful Newcastle pottery of St. Kitts, the Arawak and African designs on the ceramics of Barbados, and one's duty-free allowance of island-produced comestibles, from Jamaica's Blue Mountain coffee to the liqueurs of Curaçao — not to mention a bottle or two of the ubiquitous rum punch.

Jane Adams writes often about Caribbean travel. She is currently working on her book, *I'm Still Your Mother*, which will be published next year by Delacorte.

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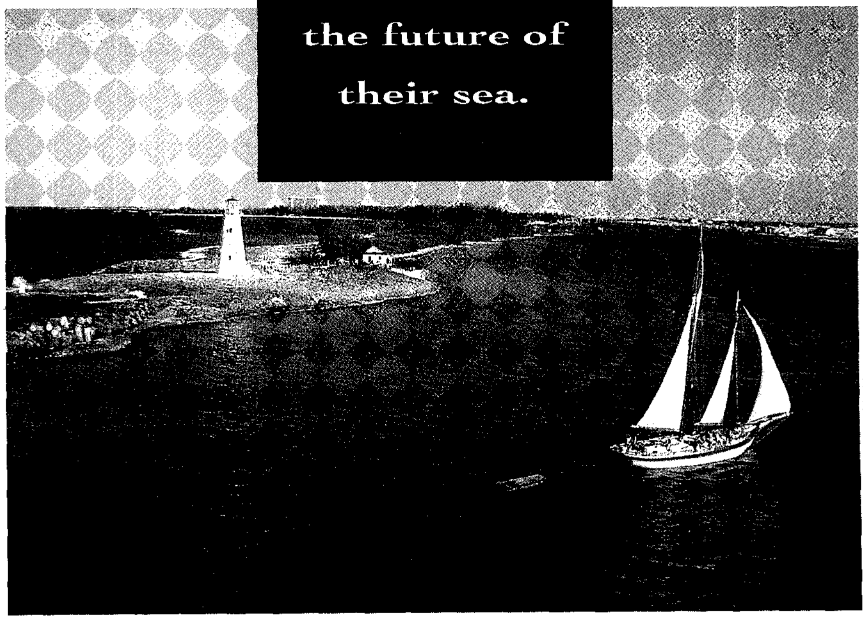

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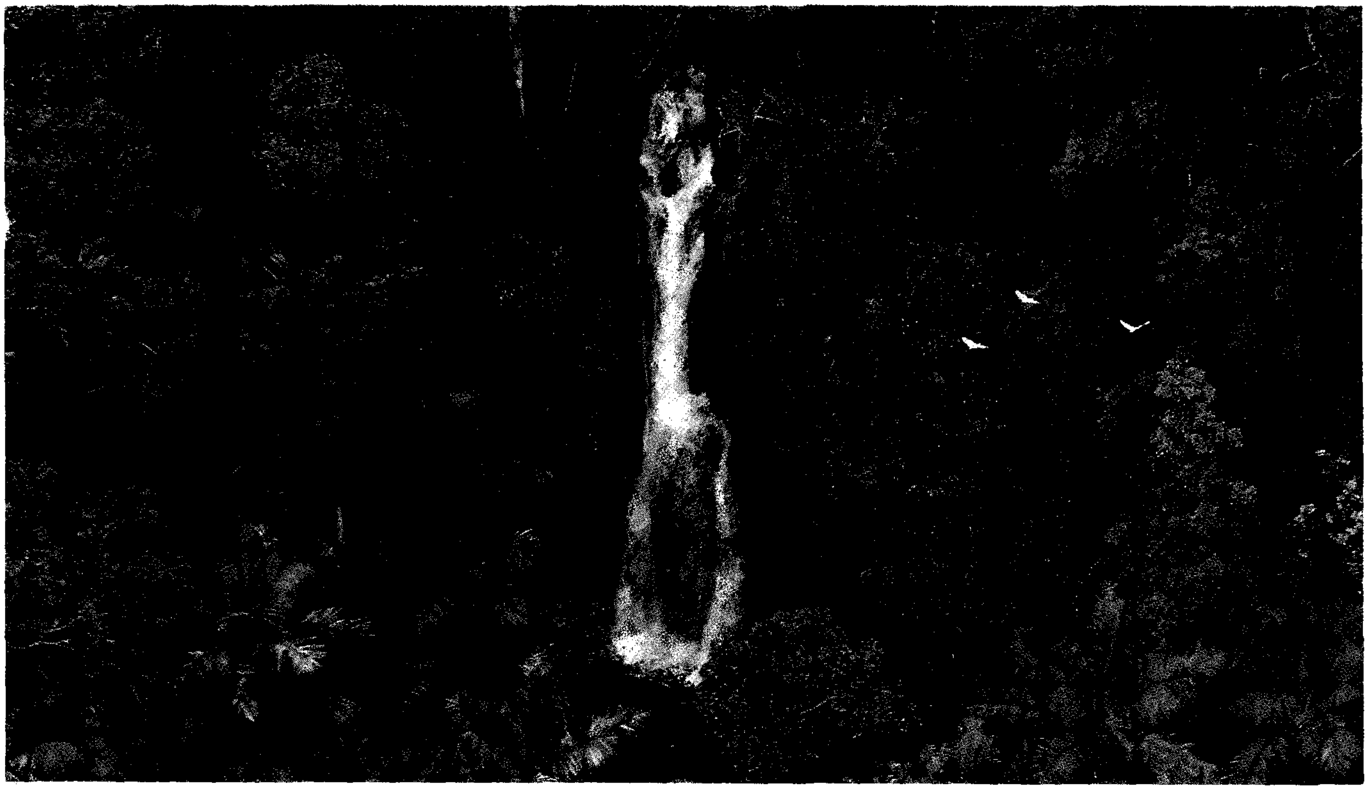

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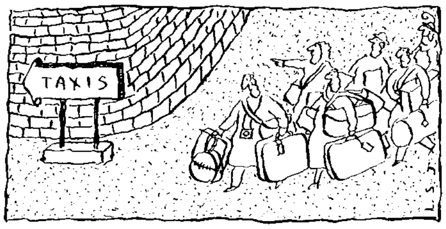
vivid hallucinatory state of the disembodied mind. Some of these dream states reminded him of reports he had heard in the military—the accounts of test pilots who flew the new reconnaissance jets so high that they could see neither clouds nor horizon and so fast that they escaped the sound of their own engines. The Air Force denied that its pilots were hallucinating in flight, but the pilots themselves had a name for the point at which they seemed to depart from reality and enter the dream state—"the breakoff." Similar dislocations were reported by soldiers stationed at lonely DEW-line outposts, and by released American P.O.W.s returning from North Korea, where they had been kept in solitary confinement. Shurley realized that what he was experiencing in the tanks was really a combination of two phenomena, which he wished to tease apart. "You cannot achieve sensory isolation without social isolation," he explained. "For an intact, developed human being, the richest source of sensory contact is input from a fellow human being."

To study the effects of social isolation independent of the sensory, Shurley went to places where there were few human beings. He studied seamen on small ships, and in the sixties spent three summers in Antarctica, recording the metabolism, sleep patterns, and psychosocial behavior of scientists and work crews sent there for thirteen-month stints by the National Science Foundation. He became such a fixture on that continent that the National Geodetic Survey named a mountain in the Pensacola Range Shurley Ridge. Students at the University of Oklahoma named his graduate course the Twenty-Foot Stare in the Ten-Foot Room. The equipment he hooked up to Genie was stickered with bills of lading from the South Pole.

Of his first visit with the child, Shurley remembers that she treated everything, including people, as objects. "If you gave her a toy, she would reach out and touch it, hold it, caress it with her fingertips, as though she didn't trust her eyes," he told me. "She would rub it against her cheek to feel it. So when I met her and she began to notice me standing beside her bed, I held my hand out and she reached out and took my hand and carefully felt my thumb and fingers individually, and then put my hand against her cheek." His clinical experience provided a context for this odd behavior. "She was exactly like a blind child," he said. "She didn't integrate tactile and visual information. Even the bunny walk—hands in front. It's what we call a blindism. It's what people do when they do not entirely believe their eyes."

Shurley arrived on the scene in time to note some of Genie's initial progress. "When I saw her first, there was pendant flesh hanging around her buttocks where the hole of the chair had been. It was bruised black. There's no record of this except in my memory. Three weeks later, it had been reabsorbed, and the bruises had gone from blue to yellow." When he returned some two months later, he noted other, less encouraging transformations. "From being a totally neglected waif at the time I did my consultation, by the time I came back Genie had become a prize," he told me. "There was a contest about who was going to investigate her, and how—about where to go with the treatment and research. You can't go everywhere. There were several leads, and after my initial sleep study I was trying to figure out where *I* wanted to go. Language acquisition was part of what I was interested in, but not a predominant part. Victoria Fromkin had declared an interest in the cognitive area, but if Genie turned out to be a mentally retarded child—genetically or because of her diet—she wouldn't be a good case for study of cognitive development. The potential for cognitive development would not be there; there would not be a flowering. This girl had lived on gruel and on milk from nursing bottles. I thought it would be easy to investigate whether her brain had suffered deprivation nutritionally, informationally, socially. I wanted to know what the effect was on her growing brain and, secondly, on her growing personality. I was more interested in the socioemotional aspects than in the cognitive. An issue that I thought could really be explored was whether she could be reattached to a maternal figure. I thought it important to put her in contact with someone she could bond with. This case was something that was not duplicable. It was important that it be exploited fully and properly—and I don't mean exploitation in a pejorative sense."



To Shurley, the prospects for a proper handling of the case seemed dim. "It was a politics-ridden situation, a matter of internecine warfare, almost from the word go," he said. "Childrens Hospital was an extraordinary location for pursuing a process that should be quiet and calm. It's supported by the celebrity community. There was a glitz factor. Anything that happened there was tainted by who was going to get the publicity, who was going to benefit—more than in any other pediatrics hospital I know of. And so, very soon, that engendered this breakdown—this conflict between doctor and hospital, between teacher, school, psychiatry, psychology. It became almost an armed camp, very quickly."

Genie, for one, seemed oblivious of the battles behind the scenes. For the first time in her life she was being treated relatively the same as other children, and was, relatively, thriving. Her mental and physical development had begun almost immediately on her admission to the hospital. By her third day, she was helping to dress herself and was voluntarily using the toilet, though her incontinence problems were to persist. After two weeks, she seemed ready for another expansion of her world, and was released into the hospital's Rehabilitation Center, a single-story building with a yard and a play school, set apart from the hospital proper. There she was free to wander or watch, or to join in playing games and using arts-and-crafts materials alongside much younger patients. While they learned creative discipline, she learned freedom. She discovered that when she dropped things, even things that broke, she was not admonished, and might, in fact, be encouraged to repeat the action. Her response to this license was what James Kent called "the most spontaneous and sustained" of her affective reactions.

"She entered quickly into a ritual play," he reported in his 1972 symposium paper, "during which she would eventually destroy the object. The nervous, tense laughter first associated with these episodes gradually changed to a relaxed and infectious laugh that would sometimes double her up and bring tears to her eyes. She would often accompany her own actions with cries of 'Stop it'—burst out laughing and repeat the action." Despite the disapproval of some on the staff, who feared that Genie would go too far in this atmosphere of permissiveness (as she indeed seemed to do one day when she gleefully jumped all over her new eyeglasses and threw them onto the roof), Kent condoned her small orgies of destruction, seeing them as "attempts at active mastery of formerly traumatic situations."

Actions that would have earned a normal child a spanking seemed in Genie to be healthy signs of emergence. One day in early spring, she made hitting gestures at a new girl in the Rehabilitation Center, much to the surprise and pleasure of her observers. Previously, her rage had been directed inward. Susan Curtiss wrote in her dissertation, "Genie would erupt and have a raging tantrum, flailing about, scratching, spitting, blowing her nose, and frantically rubbing her face and hair with her own mucus, all the time trying to gouge or otherwise inflict pain on herself—all in silence. Unable to vocalize, Genie would use objects and parts of her body to make noise and help express her frenzy: a chair scratching against the floor, her fingers scratching against a balloon, furniture falling, objects thrown or slammed against other objects, her feet shuffling. These were Genie's noises during her sobless, silent tantrum. At long last, physically exhausted, her rage would subside, and Genie would silently return to her undemonstrative self."

Now, finally, Genie had turned some anger outward, aiming it at a source of frustration. She was upset with the new girl because she was wearing a dress from the hospital laundry which Genie had formerly worn; the episode was the first indication that Genie was developing a sense of self.

She already had a sense of possession; she hoarded found objects—books, paper cups, and anything made of plastic. Gradually, she showed signs of extending that possessiveness to people. From the start, her routine had included daily walks around the grounds with James Kent, and, on most days, a drive with him to a local store or park. As was her habit, she seemed curious about him and glad to see him

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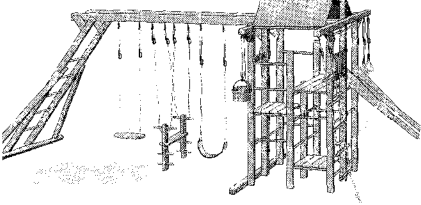

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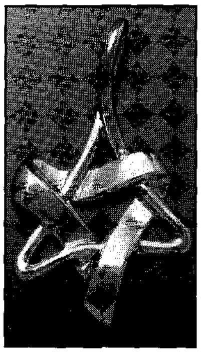

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when he arrived but did not show in any way that she distinguished him from anyone else or mourned his absences. A month passed before a fleeting facial expression indicated that she registered his departures; finally, after another month, she reached over one day and took his hand to detain him. From then on, she would pull him back down to sit beside her when it was time for him to go. She cared not at all for other children; her attachments were to adults—especially to men who, like Kent and Shurley but unlike her father, wore beards.

She made friends with women as well—particularly with a woman named Jean Butler ("Miss Butler" to the children, a title Genie abbreviated to "Mibbi"), who administered the special-education program at the Rehabilitation Center, under the aegis of the Los Angeles Public School District. Genie also befriended the center's handyman and a couple of the cooks, and it was to the latter that she turned early one morning when an earthquake hit Los Angeles. Running into the kitchen, she began verbalizing so profusely that one of the cooks commented later that if there had been one more tremor Genie would have achieved normal speech on the spot. And she was achieving speech, if not quite on the spot. Her curiosity about her new surroundings sent her on a constant quest for the names of things. She would lead one or another of her caretakers around, using their fingers to touch or point to objects, while they said the corresponding words. "Hungry to learn the words for all the new items filling her senses," Susan Curtiss wrote, "she would at times point to the whole outdoors and become frustrated and angry when someone failed to immediately identify the particular object she was focused on."

Yet, although Genie's vocabulary increased, her speech stayed limited to a few short utterances; it soon became clear that she was understanding more than she could produce. During a class at the Rehabilitation Center one day in May, Jean Butler asked a boy who was holding a couple of balloons how many balloons he had. "Three," the child said, and Genie, looking startled, handed him the extra balloon he needed to make his answer correct. Intelligence tests were now being administered to her, and she was showing remarkable progress, gaining in some areas a year in development every few months. She showed what experts in child development refer to as scatter: on some skills—in the performance of such routine tasks as bathing herself, for instance—she scored the same as an average nine-year-old; on others, such as her almost complete inability to chew food, she scored as a toddler. Within the scatter, language remained near the bottom.

She was, at any rate, exceeding expectations, and in May her progress suddenly accelerated. Her vocabulary quest became more assertive, and her spontaneous (if largely incoherent) verbalizing more frequent. She gained confidence in her movements, and began actively engaging in horseplay. She wanted to be carried piggyback, or to be swung around in the air like a whirligig. She was thrilled when someone holding her pretended to let her drop. "A great change from the child we saw at admission who shrank from most physical contact," Kent noted in his symposium paper.

MAY of 1971 was also decision time, when, under the terms of the N.I.M.H. contract, the consultants who had been observing Genie were scheduled to convene to consider her future. Several less formal meetings had been held, but this was the official one, on which the decisions about therapy and research and the application for a long-term grant would be based. David Rigler and Howard Hansen sent out the invitations; participants were booked into the Hollywood Plaza Hotel, on Vine Street. The first evening—Sunday, May 2nd—they were invited to Hansen's house "for drinks and chatter." The next morning, the chatter over, the discussion began in earnest, in the boardroom of Childrens Hospital.

The stakes were clearly high. From time to time, closet children (as imprisonment cases like Genie's have been called) and wild children (children abandoned as infants in the wilderness) have surfaced, and they have traditionally given rise to very visible science. Visible, difficult, and usually, in the long run, dubious.

The first feral child to come to the attention of what might be called modern science was Victor, the Wild Boy of Aveyron, a pitiable creature discovered in January of 1800 lurking naked in front of a tanner's cottage in the Languedoc region of southern France. He was almost completely wild, having reached an age of approximately twelve in a state of independent savagery, living in the woods and eating acorns and pilfered potatoes. He had no language; his last human contact seemed to have been with whoever had cut his throat and left him to die when he was little more than a toddler. "Rescued," he was brought to Paris, to the Institut National des Sourds-Muets, there to be observed, taught, tormented, and loved by a young physician named Jean-Marc-Gaspard Itard. So varied and fruitful was Itard's career that it gives an impression of professional profligacy; he has been called the father of child psychology and the father of the study of ear, nose, and throat disorders. Victor was his most celebrated and most frustrating subject.

The emotional connection between the ambitious teacher and his strange student is apparent from Itard's notes. Itard tells of the remorse he felt when his pressuring induced quiet tears or sobbing tantrums, of how he would sit immobile for minutes while Victor sat before him fondly caressing and kissing the teacher's knees. Even so, Itard could not refrain from using the boy's affection as a tool—challenging his trust by terrorizing him with a Leyden jar (a sort of battery that can deliver a shock), and unfairly punishing him over his lessons to test his sense of justice. Victor knew enough about justice to be outraged, and Itard found the outrage edifying. Under Itard's aggressive instruction (he once dangled the boy from a fifth-story window to frighten him out of his recalcitrance), Victor made some hard-won headway. He learned to spell the French word for milk, and on visits to a neighbor's home would take along the appropriate letters from the institute's metal teaching alphabet so that he could spell out "LAIT" while downing a glass of it. But he never learned to talk.

He was nonetheless influential. In 1912, the Italian educator Maria Montessori called Itard's work "practically the first attempts at experimental psychology," and she based some of her innovations on his experience with Victor. The metal cutouts of letters and shapes still common in Montessori classrooms are descendants of the ones that Victor used. In other ways, too,

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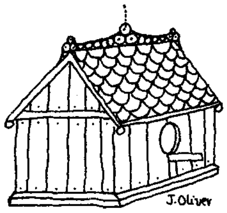
the world is different for Victor's having come under scientific scrutiny by men who understood methodology and the merits of objective observation. Even so—as Thierry Gineste, the reigning expert on the Wild Boy, contends in his book "Victor de l'Aveyron: Dernier Enfant Sauvage, Premier Enfant Fou"—the useful knowledge arising from the case was limited by how little was learned about the boy's past and about his potential. He remained, finally, an enigma.

Among the wild children discovered over the last seven centuries, more than fifty have been documented. The list includes the Hesse wolf-child; the Irish sheep-child; Kaspar Hauser; the first Lithuanian bear-child; Peter of Hanover; the second Lithuanian bear-child; the third; the Karpfen bear-girl; Tomko of Zips; the Salzburg sow-girl; Clemens, the Overdyke pig-child; Dina Sanichar of Sekandra; the Indian panther-child; the Justedal snow-hen; the Mauretanian gazelle-child; the Teheran ape-child; Lucas, the South African baboon-child; and Edith of Ohio. Investigations of these cases were generally marred by an excess of enthusiasm and a lack of methodology on the part of those who could have turned the children's misfortunes into revelation; by Genie's advent, a sorry pattern of missed opportunities had been established. "When an experiment like this comes along, there is intense excitement, and intense pressure," Jay Shurley remarked to me. "People tend to operate in these situations much more with their thalamus than with their cortex."



On the first day of the conference, Shurley gave the results of his sleep studies. Genie's brain waves, he said, had shown a large number of what are called sleep spindles—artifacts that may indicate retardation. Others' observations were more subjective, less technical. Jean Butler reported that Genie was euphoric on holidays and weekends, when she got to leave the Rehabilitation Center on chaperoned trips; that she often said "No" but didn't mean it; that she called people "peepa"; that "dert" meant "doctor." She had had no problem with urine soiling since Christmas. She had been afraid of some boys who one day came past the classroom windows carrying rifles. She was terrified of big dogs, and of all men wearing khakis. She thought that singing was exclusively for her benefit. Videotapes were shown of Genie in the Rehabilitation Center, and Rigler described a party that had been held there to celebrate her fourteenth birthday. It had overwhelmed her, he said, and her anxiety had mounted with each present opened, until at last she had to leave the room and sit in a corner holding Rigler's hand while she calmed down.

The second day was reserved for "deliberations of the consultant panel," meaning that it did not include those people seen only as caretakers, like Butler and the Rehabilitation Center cooks, who had been invited to participate on Monday. ("So Genie responds well to your intrasupportive initiatives?" a scientist had asked one of the cooks. "I just gives her love," the cook had replied.) Tuesday was for scientists only; besides Shurley, Rigler, Hansen, Kent, and Fromkin, there were some fifteen psychologists and neurologists from all over the country. When they convened, their discussion was shaped as much by an event of the evening before as by the first day's testimony.

It is one of the resonant curiosities of Genie's story that her discovery coincided with the Los Angeles première of François Truffaut's "The Wild Child," a movie that tells the story of Itard and Victor, *l'enfant sauvage de l'Aveyron*. Between the newspaper accounts of Genie's rescue on page 1 and the cinema ads in the entertainment section, art and life seemed to be doing a do-si-do. At four-thirty Monday afternoon, the day's testimony on Genie finished, the symposium members adjourned to a movie theatre a few blocks from the hospital for a private screening of "The Wild Child."

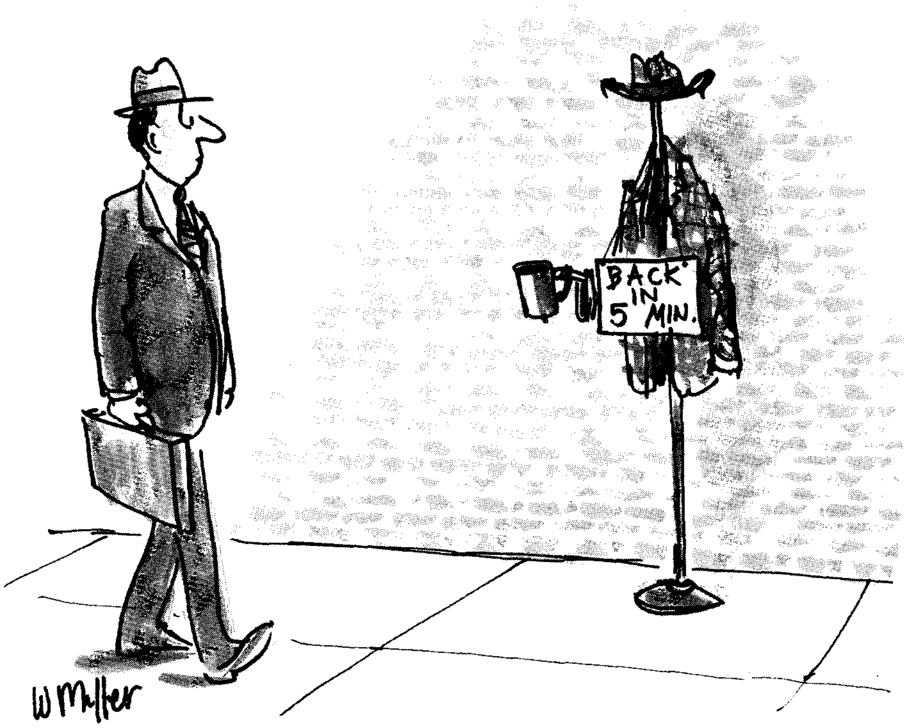
"No one had seen it before," Shurley recalled. "I hadn't seen it. The impact on the whole group was stunning. At first, there was silence. It was very moving—no one could say anything. Once people overcame the shock, the questions began to flow." The questions flowed through dinner and into the next morning's session, but anyone who may have hoped that the film would promote accord among the attendees was quickly disabused.

"There were so many things commented on," Shurley said. "All of us saw in the movie what we were prepared to see to confirm our own biases."

The biases concerned two areas: what Genie could best reveal to science and what, in the course of that revealing, science could ethically ask of Genie. Shurley's handwritten notes of the Tuesday meeting include the sentence "Rigler talked on second day on constraints on research, legal and moral." After the movie, even more than before, moral concerns seemed to be on everyone's mind.

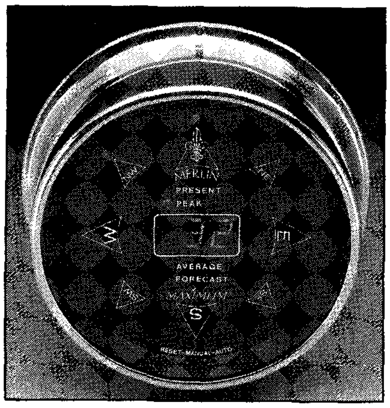
"My pitch was—and some others agreed—that the interests of the girl, in terms of therapy, would have to be uppermost, and that anything we might learn from her should be a secondary consideration, and should be done within the context of her therapy," Shurley told me. "Others said that this was too great a scientific opportunity—that research had to be primary." Three months after the conference, Rigler elegantly expressed the interdependence of the two themes in a letter to Jean Butler. "Justification for these [N.I.M.H.] funds was the scientific importance associated with the study of this child, study that was based essentially upon successful rehabilitation," he wrote. "Theories of child development hold that there are essential experiences for achievement of normal psychological and physical growth. If this child can be assisted to develop in cognitive, linguistic and social, and other areas, this provides useful information regarding the critical role of early experience which is of potential benefit to other deprived children. The research interest inherently rests upon successful achievement of rehabilitative efforts. The research goals thus coincide with [Genie's] own welfare and happiness. Conversely, if our research methods were to interfere with [her] development, they would defeat the very purpose of the research."

In Shurley's recollection of the conference, science was already interfering. "Dr. Rigler and others argued for the primacy of research—couched, of course, in ethically sensitive terms," he told me. The meeting ended in what one conferee called "some considerable confusion." Rigler was left with the chore of digesting all the debate and deciding the nature of the final N.I.M.H.-grant proposal—what kind of work the grant should fund and who should do it. The advice he had received was, perhaps, more than he had bargained for. "He looked like a man who's thirsty for a sip of water and is handed a fire hose," Shurley recalled. In a post-conference letter, Rigler and Hansen thanked the conferees for an "enriching exchange," and solicited their reactions to the proceedings.



Those reactions soon rolled in, and some had a warning tone. David Elkind, a professor of psychology at the University of Rochester, wrote, "Although language is not my area, I would like to reinforce the words of caution I expressed at the meeting. Too much emphasis on language could be detrimental if the child came to feel that love, attention, and acceptance were primarily dependent upon her speech." David A. Freedman, a professor of psychiatry at Baylor College of Medicine, in Houston, argued that the acquisition of speech might be dependent on what he, like Elkind and the cook, called love. He rejoiced in the evidence of Genie's progress which was presented in the videotapes, noting the "very dramatic . . . change in her appearance from apathy, to a wan and pitiable appearance, to an at times animated and involved little girl, which seemed to correlate with the passage of time." But his clinical experience with other unfortunate children had taught him to be cautious of the varnish that videotape and optimism can apply to such cases. He was unconvinced by surfaces. He was looking for a thaw at the center, and a visit he had had with Genie had disquieted him:

> When I arrived she was having her breakfast. Although she sat at the table with two other children who were engaged in fairly typical childish conversation and play, she had nothing to do with them. It is difficult to put into words the feeling I had about what she did. I don't think it would be accurate to say she actively ignored or rejected them. Rather it seemed to me that it was as though for her they were no different from the walls and furniture in the room. . . . The question becomes how to go about inducing in this child the ability to be aware of both herself and others and feel an interest in and need for others. My prejudices say that if this goal can be achieved she stands a chance of leading a relatively normal life; if [it] can't, she will remain an automaton. My prejudices also say that to achieve this goal it will be necessary for Genie to establish a particularly close relation with some one person whose care for her will include the provision of a good deal of body pleasure. I'm referring to something analogous to what any good mother automatically and unconsciously provides her infant as she bathes, feeds, and diapers it. Obviously this won't be easy to do for a fourteen-year-old. Yet, I believe a necessary precursor to any effective educative process would be her development of an intense, dependent attachment to some one person whom she would be interested both in identifying herself with and pleasing. . . .
>
> Without the creation of such an attachment, and all it implies with regard to Genie's need to attempt to maintain it, I doubt whether she will have the equipment to integrate whatever skills she develops. I believe something along this line was implicit in the sense of the group when we were all in accord that it would not be indicated to attempt to train



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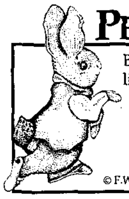

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> Genie in talking. . . . She should be, in my view, bathed, clothed, toileted, massaged, kissed, cuddled, and fondled all by one person. Other people should be available but in a distinctly secondary role. Out of such an intense relation should grow both an awareness of herself and of whoever it is who is caring for her. Such an awareness, to reiterate, seems to me to be the necessary first step in her education.

Later that summer, Rigler made his grant decision, and its focus was on language acquisition—not teaching Genie language so much as watching how she learned it. The main beneficiary was the scientist whom Shurley remembers as having had the least to say at the May session. "It was a surprise when I learned that Victoria Fromkin initiated a major study," he told me. "But Rigler thought a language study was a good idea—though he later came to doubt it."

Shurley fully understood why the case might be perplexing. "At first, confronted with this child, we didn't know what questions to ask her," he told me. "Genie was an absolutely beautiful example of a process: when confronted with nature—human nature—in the raw, you stumble around and come up with one or two questions to ask. If they are the right questions—which is to say, if they are the relevant questions—then you get around to the content, and you begin to read what was written there all along. The questions come out of your culture. The Wild Boy of Aveyron—Victor—came along when all the questions of the Enlightenment were being asked. And they were asked of him. But he didn't answer them."

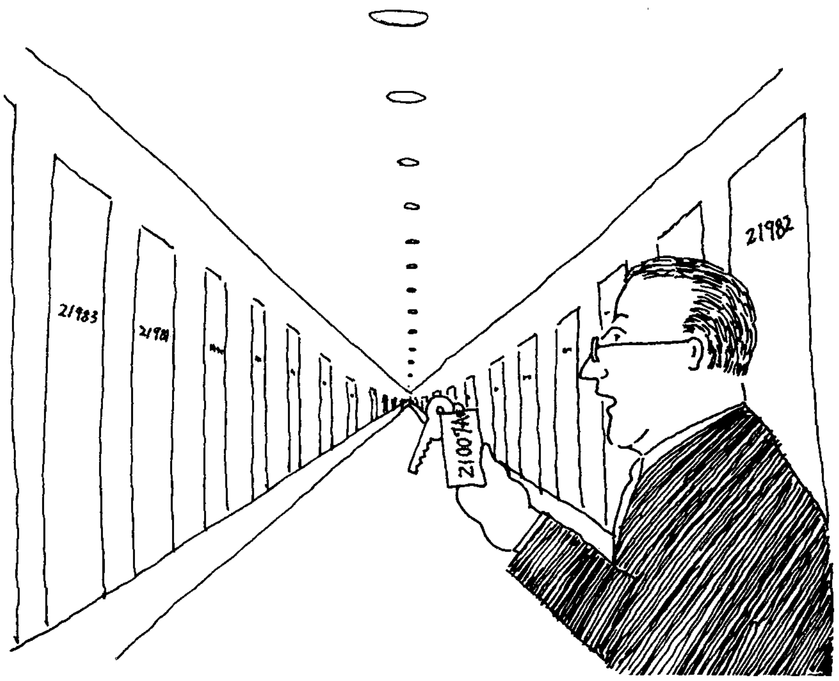
STRUCK though Shurley and the other conferees were by Truffaut's movie, they could not have imagined, as they sat in the otherwise empty movie theatre, how deep would run the parallels between the two so distant cases—the boy abandoned to the forests of revolutionary France and the girl trapped in a twentieth-century American suburban bedroom—or how insistently the similarities would surface. Indeed, simply by viewing the movie the committee was aligning the case in hand with the one on the screen: in 1800, the scientists deciding the fate of the Wild Boy had also sought counsel from popular entertainment. They attended a play, then the rage in Paris, about a fictitious *enfant sauvage*. The melodrama was called "The Forest's Child," and Victor was named after its protagonist.

Like Genie, Victor seemed on discovery to be impervious to heat and cold: he pulled potatoes out of the fire with his bare hands, and he cavorted naked in the snow. Like Genie, he seemed not to make distinctions between what could best be perceived by feel and what by sight, suffering from what one attending scientist termed "a dissonance of vision and touch." Like Genie, he was substantially oblivious of the existence of anyone but himself. ("I am dismayed to see the natural man so egotistical," reported J.-J. Virey, one of Victor's first observers.) As would be the case more than a century and a half later, the egotism seemed, at least on the surface, gradually to melt. Like Genie in the Rehabilitation Center, Victor adopted as a favorite activity the setting of the table. One day, he set a place for the just deceased husband of his loving caretaker, Mme. Guérin, and her tears astonished him; it was his first encounter with human grief. He put the place setting in the cupboard and never brought it out again.

As with Genie, Victor's discovery occasioned a sideshow, though on something of a grander scale. His arrival in Paris from the departmental capital of Rodez—the trip, by coach, had taken a week, during which the boy was kept on a leash—created a public furor. Rumors flowed through the crowd surrounding the institute grounds that he was perhaps the long-lost Louis XVII, who, like some premonitory Anastasia, had survived the execution of his royal parents and was said to have fled into the forest; however, the foundling's age seemed wrong. Oddsmakers set up shop, taking bets on whether the boy would ever talk, ever be civilized. Newspapers carried the betting charts. Itard sequestered Victor from the more indiscriminate attentions; later, however, he acted as Victor's chaperon among the perils of Parisian high society. When the two accepted a summons to dine with Mme. Récamier, the ravishing young socialite whose attentions conferred social beatification in the capital, Victor left the table and ran into the yard, tore off his clothes, and climbed a tree; he was not invited back. On another occasion, he met the Marquis de Sade—an encounter that the official history of the Institut describes as "*vraiment un rendez-vous manqué.*"

The public's interest in Victor was not just morbid. Modern children who are abused or neglected draw our attention because we see them, usually, as disturbing exceptions, albeit symptomatic ones, to society's prevailing order. In France in 1800, order was not presumed; the Committee of Public Safety and the Reign of Terror had taken care of that. Even in the prevailing order of earlier, calmer eras, children did not enjoy their current cosseted status. The Enlightenment's emphasis on the worth of the individual had been extended to individual children, but in a grudging sort of way, and the expedience of leaving them—at least, the unwanted ones—to die in the woods was not unheard of and not altogether shocking. The boy found naked in the tanner's doorway was interesting to his country's citizens not because his brutal history astonished them but because the Enlightenment and the Terror had honed an appreciation of certain questions that the boy might be able to address—questions about the nature of man. Strange as it seems in an age in which philosophy is a thing apart from pop culture, the betting sheets in the *journaux* of Paris were a street referendum on the ideas of Montaigne, Rousseau, Descartes, Condillac, and Locke.

Whatever its more general effects, the Revolution seemed to have worked to Victor's advantage. Foremost among its courtesies was its timely end, which permitted a renewal of interest in things scientific. During the preceding decade, Paris had not been a happy place for scientists, among others. Intellectual independence had been considered almost as subversive as priestly piety. The Society of Observers of Man, the anthropological organization that initiated the research on Victor, was only a month old when he was discovered. Ten years earlier, the Revolutionary government had sanctioned the institute where he was to live, adding "National" to its name and supporting it from state coffers. The deaf had been considered subhuman, before the school's successful efforts to teach them sign language, and had been locked away in the purgatory of the Bicêtre asylum, with criminals, epileptics, and the insane. For the government, the new ability of deaf people to communicate was a symbolic resurrection, a metaphorical promise to the voiceless of all kinds. The government had also



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appointed a doctor, Philippe Pinel, to run Bicêtre, instead of the usual policeman. Pinel would become known as the father of psychiatry. Like Abbé Sicard, the director of the Institut National, he played a role in Victor's education: the two proclaimed him unsalvageable, a true and irremediable idiot. After that harsh dismissal, the boy languished for months in a limbo of neglect, until Itard, disagreeing with Sicard, his mentor, took on the task of proving Victor's potential.

Like bronze, French science is a useful amalgam of two slightly softer elements. Descartes set out the basic scientific method, rooting it in a rigorous adherence to what can logically be inferred; he trusted the corporeal senses the way a Bedouin trusts the shimmer of silver in distant sands. A century later, the philosopher Étienne Bonnot de Condillac adopted a more generous opinion of outward experience. Taking his cue from the empiricism of John Locke, Condillac contended that our minds are blank slates at birth and are tutored entirely by our surroundings. The world lived in Descartes; Condillac lived in the world.

Much scientific endeavor of the eighteenth century was aimed at determining the physical distinctions between man and beast. It had long been held by some that the physiological feature most innately human was the fanny, or perhaps the calf—or, at least, the upright posture that had created both of them. But then the voyages of exploration reached Borneo, where Europeans encountered upright and eminently fannied orangutans, and the distinction collapsed. Articulation of vocal sounds was another promising criterion, except that magpies could also do it pretty well, and New World parrots marvellously. And the ability to express emotions was the property of any pet. So hotly contested was the border between men and animals that the Indians discovered in the West by Columbus were not accepted as human until they were conclusively decreed to be so by a papal bull, in 1537. In Condillac's time, the orangutan's possible humanity was so seriously contemplated that it was proposed that one be mated with a prostitute to see what progeny would ensue.

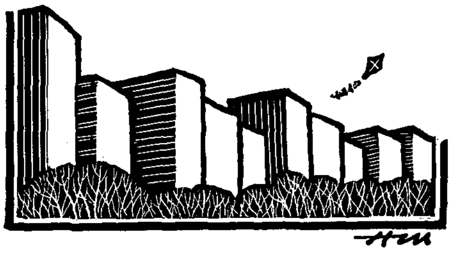
Clearly, some defining event was needed. The scientists of the age, like physical anthropologists of a later day, sought a missing link—in this case, a living one, someone or something perched squarely on the species' frontier. By their orthodoxy, that would have to be either a talking ape or a human being reared without human contact, like an animal in the wild. So distinct from humanity were feral children considered that Linnaeus, in his "Systema Naturae," accorded them status as a separate species, *Homo ferus.*

Victor, even before he reached Paris, was debunking some of the prominent theories. To the dismay of the upright-stance advocates, he was seen, during one of his several escape attempts, to cross a field on all fours, running close to the ground, like an animal. J.-J. Virey found no sign of another "innate" human trait: "Is our young Aveyronnais capable of pity?" he asked. "Personally, I venture to believe that if this young man could . . . bring some interest to bear on the things around him, then he would be inclined to commiserate as much as children ordinarily are." Like Genie, Victor hoarded what he cherished, and he refused to share. Like Genie, he warmed only slowly to adults and not at all to other children. Having given the lie to physical rectitude and empathic feeling as defining characteristics, the boy, like Genie, was called to preside over a grander mystery—the mystery near the center of the web.

Montaigne said, in an essay of 1580, "I believe that a child brought up in complete solitude, far from all intercourse (which would be a difficult experiment to carry out), would have some kind of speech to express his ideas," and he implied that the inherent enigma was still that of Psamtik: Which language would the child speak? The Enlightenment tortured new subtleties out of that question. Was our native language that of the soul, of society, or of the intellect? Did thought lead to language, and language to society? Some inverted the progression: society was our most innate characteristic, they said; it enabled language; language enabled thought. Did the child in the woods not think, then? Was it possible to think with something other than language? Was it impossible to think alone? Or was thinking alone the necessary precursor to all else? The questions outlived the age. By the end of the nineteenth century, the German philologist Heymann Steinthal had concluded that language was not meant solely for communication. "Language is self-awareness," he said. "That is, understanding oneself . . . as one is understood by another. One understands oneself: that is the beginning of language."

For Victor, all this distilled into a make-or-break equation: no matter whether he crawled or crept, if he could talk he would be judged human. The equation was different, but hardly less compelling, for Jean-Marc-Gaspard Itard. If he could resurrect the boy from savagery, he would provide what he termed "concrete proof" of Condillac's theories. He would demonstrate that man brings nothing with him, that education is all.

However, for the young teacher and his young charge the beginnings of language were difficult to locate. In the drafty apartments of the Institut National, the two suffered together through one or another draconian teaching scheme for two years before Itard finally developed a system that showed some promise. He trained the boy to recognize certain written words and to connect those words with individual objects—the word *chaussure*, for instance, with a particular shoe. This accomplishment led to a game—a combination of flash cards and hide-and-seek, in which Itard wrote a word and Victor ran around their chambers seeking its correlate. Then Itard took the game a step further, depriving Victor of the specific shoe and making him seek others, thus forcing him to form a generalized notion of the word's meaning. For a while, the boy was off on a rocket ride of comprehension. He learned not only to find an object if he was presented with its written name but also to write the name when he was shown the object. And not just objects: he learned adjectives and verbs as well, with which he could both comprehend and concoct written sentences. Interestingly, even a little bit of language seemed to open up new ways of thinking for him. The boy



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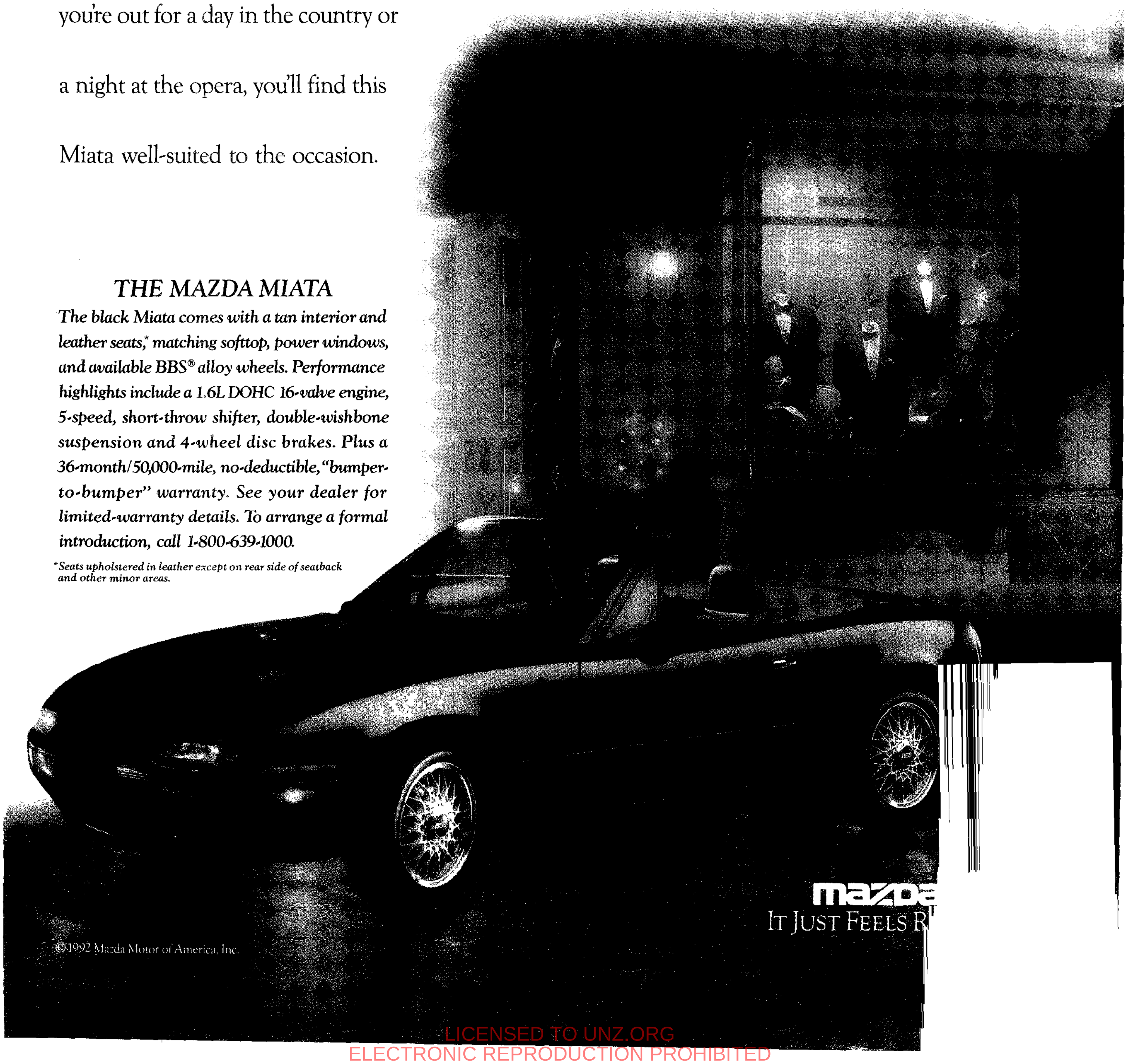

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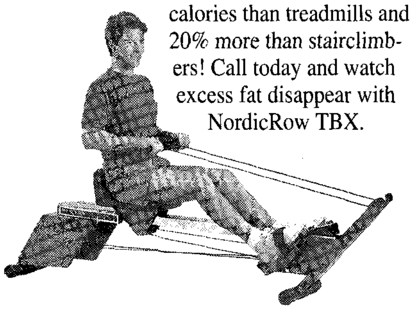

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who had been completely adrift could concentrate. Chores he had performed mechanically were suddenly imbued with spontaneity and imagination. He even seemed better able to imagine the needs of others.

The triumphant note at the end of Truffaut's movie marks the point of Itard's First Report, presented in 1801, when Victor had made a certain amount of frail early progress and seemed on the verge of much more. Five years later, Itard offered the Society of Observers of Man his Second Report, and it is markedly different. There had been progress, true, but Itard had come to appreciate the limits, rather than the potential, of his young student's mind. The boy was clearly capable of hearing and producing the necessary sounds, but he had shown that he would never learn to speak. His writing skills could proceed only so far. And his progress had been obstructed by the debilitating "crisis" of puberty, which drove the boy into torments and distractions that he was even less able to control or understand than other boys his age. Itard bled him to relieve his hormonal storms and recommended stopping the experiment.

In 1811, when Victor was in his early twenties, he was evicted from the Institut. He went to live with his caretaker, Mme. Guérin, in a small house in the Impasse de Feuillantines, a few blocks away. He received a small state pension, but he was otherwise forgotten by the government and the public, and even by Itard, his former champion. Itard was on the way to being famous: in 1814, he received the Medal of the Legion of Honor; in 1821, he was elected to the Academy of Medicine. He continued to work at the Institut, but he never walked over to visit his onetime pupil. Victor died in 1828. His obscurity in his later years was not just the result of the failure of Itard's experiment; the times had changed. The questions of the Enlightenment had lost their urgency. When a new wild child was discovered in the provinces some years later, the provincial authorities notified the government in Paris, and the Parisians replied, "You keep him."

IF the questions of the Enlightenment went underground, they didn't go far. Just when we think we have moved on to more modern perils in the Age of Deconstruction, they recur. When Noam Chomsky professes the innate nature of language, citing the inadequacy of the input the child receives from its encompassing world, and when Catherine Snow responds that she is sure the child must glean most of its language from its surroundings, they are donning Cartesian and Lockean robes. Genie intruded into that argument, and fell into a wonderland of ancient rivalries. Her Hansens and Kents were children of Pinel, her Jean Butlers descendants of Itard. Condillac attended, his ghost guiding those who hoped that education would determine the remainder of Genie's life. Condillac is the patron, and Descartes the hobgoblin, of social workers everywhere.

Unlike most of the known wild children, both Victor of Aveyron and Genie of Temple City arrived to expectant audiences. Victor's début was timed roughly to the questions of Condillac and precisely to the creation of the Society of Observers of Man. In 1971, Genie had the services of a different advance team. As David Elkind, one of her early observers, puts it, "Chomsky was new then, and linguistics was hot—there was a new theory coming out every day." Her arrival was even more precisely timed to the advent of one of those theories.

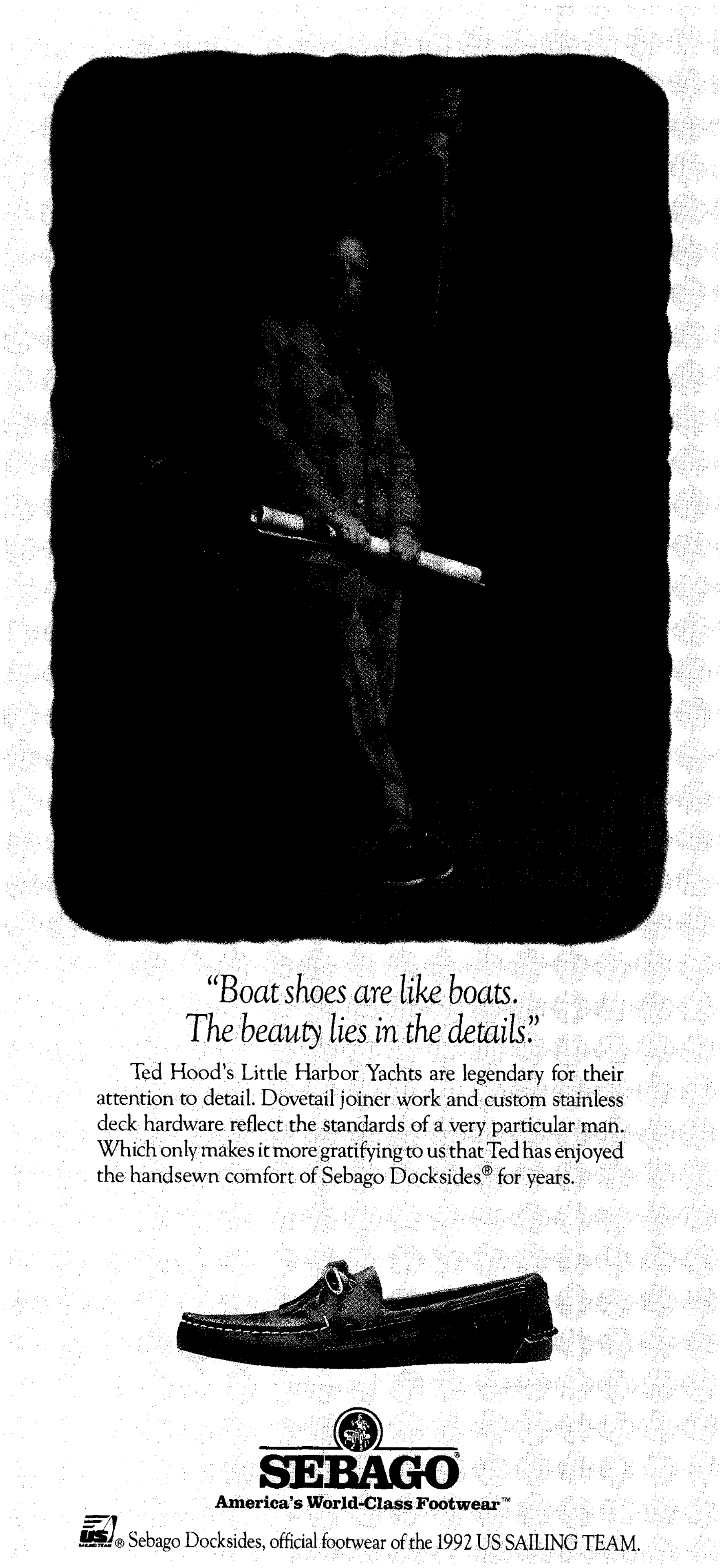
The study of language acquisition in children turns on a single simple idea—one that I heard most succinctly expressed in the keynote speech at the 1989 Stanford Child Language Research Forum. The address was delivered by Lila Gleitman, a professor of psychology and linguistics at the University of Pennsylvania. In her late fifties, with close-cropped dark-gray hair and wearing an orange-patterned frock and sneakers, she managed to give the impression, as she leaned on the lectern, of a truant leaning against a gymnasium wall smoking a cigarette instead of going to class, and being too cool to care. "Can you hear me?" she barked into the microphone, and then snorted to herself, "Huh! Only too well." The snort, it turned out, was a trademark—the nasal harrumph of a prizefighter, equal parts cynicism and deviant relish. On the movie screen behind her appeared a slide of the front page of a supermarket tabloid, with a headline reading "MOM GIVES BIRTH TO 2-YEAR-OLD BABY," beneath which was the subhead "CHILD WALKS, TALKS IN 3 DAYS."

The audience laughed. The speaker finished arranging her papers and looked up. "As by now you probably know, I'm Lila Gleitman," she said. "And basically what I want to talk about is this." She walked over and hit the screen a sharp one with a pointer. "What took three days?"

What Took Three Days has been Gleitman's obsession for the last several decades, during which she has become, rather despite herself, an ardent Chomskian. "People say, 'That Lila, she's just this crazy rationalist,' " Gleitman told me over lunch the day after her speech. " 'She thinks everything's innate.' But I started out as a hard-core empiricist, honest! I designed my studies to prove the empiricist position, and I couldn't ignore it when they showed me to be wrong."

One of the experiments she designed was directly inspired by empiricism's patron saint. "Locke said, 'Look at blind people—there should be some things they can't learn,' " she told me. "So we did the experiment. We thought, We'll see how experience guides language learning. But what happened was that the blind children learned things they shouldn't have been able to. They knew the answers to things beyond their ability to experience. That was very upsetting. Well, we were happy at this victory of the human spirit but unhappy at having wasted our time with blind children. I figured the experiment had failed—simple as that! I went to my husband, Henry"—Henry Gleitman was then the chairman of Penn's Psychology Department—"and he said, 'So how *did* the kid learn the answer?' I said, 'Oh, that's not important,' and I went to Cambridge to talk with Chomsky. He was very interested. He said, 'So how *did* the kid learn the answer?' This was a little epiphany to me. I said, 'Oh, boy, I'm in trouble. Chomsky the mad rationalist and Henry Gleitman the mad empiricist agree on this.' So we went back, and the only explanation we could find was that the child was being guided by syntactic rules within the question—rules he already understood. The syntax tells the answer."

To the linguists assembled in the Stanford auditorium Gleitman had said, "I've done everything I could think of to kids to show that they were responding to the world, and not to



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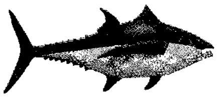

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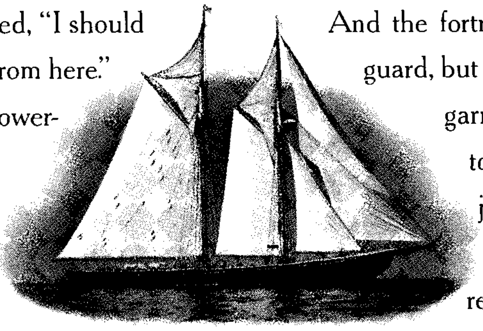

By George, we've come a long way. Oh certainly, the Viking sod houses are still nestled in grassy knolls of Newfoundland

And the fortresses remain guard, but happily the garrison, sailors townsfolk (livin just as they w are leagues m receptive.

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some inner quality. We started . . . *testing the effects of good and bad* mothers, but they didn't have any effect. So we ripped the ears off of kids—we tested deaf kids. Then we tore their eyes out. Still, you know what? The little bastards learned language. The human child has a massive resistance to conditions, because he is going to learn language no matter what. You take away language, he invents one. We even did a nice study of preemies. They have the same experience in the world as full-term children do, but they're at a different physiological stage. It turns out that the age since conception is better as an indicator of language performance than the age since birth. Now, surely, observation of the world is one source of evidence. You can't take all forms of perception away from children. If you did, they would be falling off ledges and mistaking tigers for kitty cats, and pretty soon there wouldn't be any more children. But children aren't learning language from experience. They learn *words* from experience. They bring the sentence with them."

In the innatism to which Gleitman was a convert, the Three Days question was not "How do children learn language?" but "How does language flower out of the child?" What happens in the mind to permit that burgeoning comprehension? Gleitman had already found a piece of the puzzle: she showed that the Three Day clock is set at conception. But when does the clock run down? Is there a set deadline to language learning? This was the question to which Genie's arrival was so explicitly timed. It burst into prominence in 1967, three years before her discovery, with the publication of a book by the Harvard neuropsychologist Eric Lenneberg called "Biological Foundations of Language." The book was in some ways more revolutionary than Chomsky's of a decade earlier—more revolutionary for being more concrete. Lenneberg played Lenin to Chomsky's Marx, Itard to Chomsky's Condillac. As Catherine Snow puts it, "*Chomsky's brain, the linguist's brain,* has no nerves in it; Lenneberg gave it a biologist's brain, with a cortex and lobes and axons and dendrites."

Chapter 4 of "Biological Foundations of Language" presented what has since been called the critical-period hypothesis. It suggested that the brain is able to learn a primary language during a certain early period, and not later on, and it proposed physiological explanations of why this might be so. Lenneberg's innovation lay in those explanations; the idea itself had been around for a while. The Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget had spent his life observing and investigating the stages at which children develop certain capacities. According to Lenneberg, the child's ability to learn its mother tongue effectively ends at the onset of sexuality. If Chapter 4 were to be borne out, it would have the effect of vindicating Chomsky, for how could language be tied to our biological clock if it weren't tied to our biology?

His concreteness notwithstanding, Lenneberg was, like Chomsky, a theoretician. What was needed was a clinician's validation, but the clinician would need something to work with: *a child who had exceeded Lenneberg's* deadline—who had passed twelve and hit puberty—but was still embarking on learning language for the first time. After 1967, there was a yearning in the linguistic field for a proper young arbiter—someone who could do for Lenneberg and Chomsky what Victor of Aveyron had been meant to do for Condillac.

THE accounts in Susan Curtiss's dissertation of Genie's progress in the hospital during the spring of 1971 are all secondhand, gleaned from videotapes and interviews. Until after the consultants' conference, in May, the U.C.L.A. graduate student and the subject who would shape her career had not even met. On June 4th, that situation changed: Curtiss accompanied Victoria Fromkin on a visit to the hospital.

She found the setting itself daunting. "I was never a person who thought of being a nurse or doctor," she told me. "I've never been comfortable in the children's ward of a hospital. I'm not good in hospitals. It's not my strong suit. I was also scared—or, at any rate, nervous." And with reason. To an unacclimated sensibility, Genie was a true grotesque. She was barefoot on the morning Curtiss met her, her tininess exaggerated by a dress that was too long, her movements jerky, her teeth jagged and discolored, her hair thin. Curtiss describes her as "pitiful and strange," and something else: pretty. The scientist was enthralled by the softness of the child's manner, her beautiful skin, the blush in her cheeks, "almost as if an artist had painted each one of them carefully and delicately," and her upturned nose, "finely drawn like that of a china doll." She soon learned that Genie's indiscriminate spitting, scratching, nose-blowing, food-filching behavior could be somewhat less appealing. "It was hard," Curtiss said of the early contacts. "She was

"This sounds serious—like something we should go to Maine and work out."

very— She was—hmm—challenging."

The timing of Curtiss's arrival made her mission doubly difficult. Genie had not yet been trained into social acceptability, but in other ways she had progressed unfortunately far from her innocence of the autumn before. "In terms of watching Genie learn language," Curtiss said, "I felt I was arriving a little late."

Her tardiness was relative. If Curtiss had been at the hospital's admissions desk on the day Genie arrived, she would have encountered a languaged person, in the sense that all children have some degree of language before they begin making use of it. Genie could not have acquired her meagre store of words if she had not previously mastered one of the most profound early tasks of any language learner: she had learned to separate meaningful sounds from the general cacophony surrounding her. In the words of Lila Gleitman in her address to the Stanford conference, Genie had "bootstrapped."

"The child has no passwords," Gleitman said on that occasion. "He doesn't know he's in the U.S. He doesn't know he's learning English. His mom shows him this room"—she waved a hand out over the audience—"and describes it. What does she say? 'Bahbahbahbahbahbahbahbahbahbah.' That's what she says. She could have said that the lady in back there is wearing blue, but what she really said, as far as the child knows, is 'Bahbahbahbahbahbahbahbah.' The question is: How does he figure out what his mother is saying about the room? O.K.? That's the story. That's bootstrapping."

What Gleitman calls bootstrapping is called other things by other linguists, depending on their academic orientation. But the mystery is the same: How does the child divide a stream of sound into syllables and sentences that he can begin to make sense of? It is easy to understand the child's bafflement. One has only to listen to an animated conversation in an unfamiliar language: our own language is built of discrete blocks, everyone else's of quicksilver. It seems as hard to grab a word out of a foreign tongue as to clutch a fistful of water from a pond. Yet the child, for whom all tongues are foreign, does just that.

Scientists are not yet sure whether the young listener first grabs phonemes—that is, individual speech sounds—or syllables, which can be made up of one or more phonemes. In normal conversation, nine hundred phonemes race by each minute, and there is attached to most of them no meaning to indicate their significance. Words have meaning, but their variations in length and form are countless, their boundaries indistinct. In normal speech, we break words up and slur adjacent words together; sometimes we pause within words. And if words are devious, sentences are even more so.

Here, as elsewhere, babies seem to know more than linguists can explain. Babies are born with some feeling for or understanding of language on both the phoneme and the sentence level. Among the hundreds of phonemes used in the world's known languages, only forty are found in English. Newborns in English-speaking families display a preference for those forty, possibly from having heard them in the womb. They respond to their mother's native tongue. As the child ages, that discrimination becomes more pronounced;

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the child becomes more and more of a specialist. An adult speaker of English cannot accurately hear the phonemes peculiar to Chinese or French, much less replicate them in speech, without intensive training. Interestingly, it appears that the newborn doesn't so much develop his predilection for his mother tongue as let his perception of "foreign" phonemes atrophy. A Chinese baby is born with a developing bent for his native "r"-less language, but he can hear and pronounce "r"s. An American baby can do the same for all the French vowel sounds.

An equally astonishing ability applies to sentences. In the mid-nineteen-eighties, Kathy Hirsh-Pasek, who studied at the knee of Lila Gleitman and now teaches at Temple University, was frustrated by one of the standard constraints of linguistics research: most testing is done verbally, and therefore only children who already have language are tested. What, she asked, did the prelinguistic child know? She and two colleagues devised methods to measure the responses of very young subjects. They played tape recordings of sentences to nine-month-olds and observed eye movements for telltale indications of recognition. When the sentence ended at the proper place, the child acknowledged it. When the sentence ended improperly, the child did not recognize it as language. The incorrect sentence was received in the same way as arbitrary noise. Hirsh-Pasek has applied this method to younger and younger children. She professes surprise at the further results. Infants of four and a half months can tell correct from incorrect sentences, and what's more, they can do so for sentences both in Polish and English. The tests suggest that the ability that the nine-month-old has in its mother tongue the infant may have in any language. It has not yet let languish the grammars it will not use.

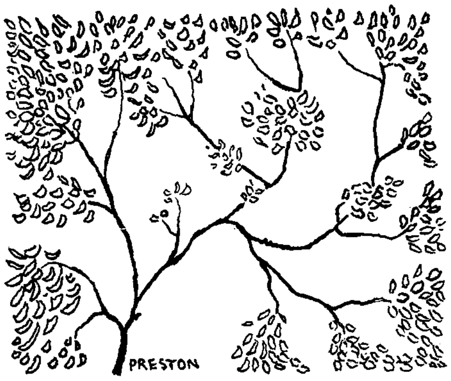
Though Genie had embarked on language learning before Curtiss met her, she hadn't acquired enough to make her available to the standardized tests that determine children's linguistic competence. In the summer of 1971, Curtiss and Fromkin faced the task of inventing a completely new set of linguistic examinations, appropriate to her. They eventually devised twenty-six of them. The administration of those tests, along with a battery of psychological and neurological tests, would within five years make Genie, in David Rigler's words, "perhaps one of the most tested children in history."

Fortunately, the linguistic-research tradition allows for other, less rigid methods. Curtiss began a diary on the day she met Genie, recording everything that Genie said and analyzing it for signs of progress. Even here, Genie was stubbornly enigmatic. Most of the time, she said nothing; her vocalizations were usually whimpers or squeaks. "She had been beaten for vocalizing," Curtiss explained to me. "So when she spoke she was very tense, very breathy and soft. She couldn't be understood. There was a lot of sound distortion, as though she had cerebral palsy, but there was no evidence of muscle or nerve damage. Also, she had a high fundamental pitch. It was so high that we couldn't analyze it on the instruments we use to acoustically analyze human speech. And she was monotonic—high monotone. No pitch variation whatsoever."

Realizing how fruitless any attempt at formal research would be for the moment, Curtiss settled in for a summer of watching—getting to know the child, and trying to gain her confidence. She sat with the patients in the Rehabilitation Center and, usually accompanied by Rigler or James Kent, took Genie on excursions.

"I would go by and take Genie for walks, or take her out to fast-food restaurants," Kent recalled. "At first, a nurse would go along with us. The nurse and I were supposed to be like surrogate parents, giving Genie the feeling of a family structure. We would hear some language from her on these trips, so Susan Curtiss started coming along to hear what Genie said. Genie was soon attached to Susie more than to the nurse who was supposed to be her surrogate mom."

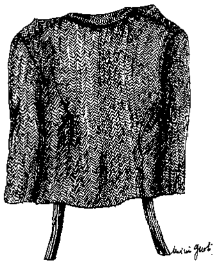
The itineraries gradually expanded: they went to the zoo; they went for walks in Griffith Park. Especially, they went shopping—an activity Genie liked so much that on the way to the shopping center she would point to every passing building and repeat one of her new words, "Store?" The local Safeway and a Woolworth's were Genie's emporiums of choice, and there she displayed to Curtiss her disconcerting brilliance at both offensive and charming behavior. She would attach herself to strangers whom she found interesting, grabbing their arms, putting her face directly in front of theirs and staring into their eyes. Or she would attach herself with equal fervor to their possessions, from which Curtiss would have to pry her loose.



One piece of merchandise she found irresistible was beach pails. On an outing in mid-June, Kent used Genie's fascination with them to demonstrate a linguistic curiosity to Curtiss—a problem of definitions. He pointed to one plastic pail and asked Genie what it was. "Pail," she said. He pointed to another, and she said "Bucket." There was no discernible difference between the two, but Genie was resolute in her distinction. The pails were located in a section of Woolworth's that Genie found especially enticing—an aisle of bright-colored plastic containers. Along with pails and buckets she coveted plastic necklaces, plastic purses, plastic trash cans—anything made of plastic.

When I asked David Rigler about the preference, the explanation upset him. "I think it was because of the bright colors and the texture," he said. "We learned that during her isolation Genie had had some small plastic toys. She had had a plastic raincoat hanging on the wall across from her potty seat." He paused, and then rushed on. "You visualize this house, and you picture this kid seated in this room, day after day, with very limited stimulation. She's grasping for some kind of stimulation, and the things she can see play a very large role. There's a plastic raincoat on the opposite wall." Rigler bowed his head suddenly, as though dismissing something unbearable. "She liked plastic," he concluded.

For Genie, the excursions were visits to a magic kingdom. Her innocent questing elicited extraordinary responses. A butcher at the Safeway saw how fascinated she was by the shrink-wrapped meat packages. He opened the service window and held out to her an unwrapped cut of steak, and she fondled, smelled, and studied it. In like fashion, over the months, he offered for her inspection bones, chickens, fish, and turkeys, all wordlessly, as though he and she shared a tacit understanding. Occasionally, when Curtiss reached the checkout counter the cashier would produce a toy or a trinket, with the explanation that "the man ahead of you sensed she wanted this and bought it for her." The gifts were chosen with such uncanny accuracy and were tendered in such silence that Curtiss became convinced that she was witnessing a preternatural communication—an explicit, unvoiced understanding—that her careful notebook analysis was unequipped to explain.



"Genie was the most powerful nonverbal communicator I've ever come across," Curtiss told me. "The most extreme example of this that comes to mind: Because of her obsession, she would notice and covet anything plastic that anyone had. One day, we were walking—I think we were in Hollywood. I would act like an idiot, sing operatically, to get her to release some of that tension she always had. We reached the corner of this very busy intersection, and the light turned red, and we stopped. Suddenly, I heard the sound—it's a sound you can't mistake—of a purse being spilled. A woman in a car that had stopped at the intersection was emptying her purse, and she got out of the car and ran over and gave it to Genie and then ran back to the car. A plastic purse. Genie hadn't said a word."

Genie's more conventional communication was improving. She still spoke in one-word snippets, but with an enhanced vocabulary. She was catching on to the give-and-take of conversation. She seemed, in fact, to have gained roughly the level that Victor had achieved at the Institut National des Sourds-Muets: she was forming social attachments and had picked up enough crude language (though hers was spoken, while Victor's was written) to express her needs. Great attention had been paid all along, of course, to even the smallest signs of Genie's psychological state. When David Elkind met her, he noticed that she retrieved an item from her dresser drawer. "She had the idea of object permanence," he told me. "That's a major cognitive step for a child. Does something exist when it is not present to our senses? Children don't get that until after their first year." He also witnessed her attempts to bark like a dog she had heard earlier in the day. "That's a deferred imitation, and the delay is mediated by mental imagery," Elkind said. "So she was into her preoperational period."

"Preoperational period" is the terminology of Piaget, the Swiss psychologist who believed that children have critical periods not just in language acquisition but in general mental development. The mind doesn't expand only by learning, he said. It unfolds naturally from within, going through predictable stages as the child matures. Preoperational thought is the second of those stages. Piaget saw the growth of language as tied to the growth of thought, as though it were a branch on the cognitive plant. Chomsky is inclined to see language learning and cognitive development as independent plants in a common garden. It was another dispute that Genie might shed light on eventually, but in the meantime Curtiss's evaluation of Genie's mental level concurred with the Piaget scale. The fervent search for names of things placed her at the beginning of preoperational thinking.

By all measurements, then, Genie was equipping herself to break out of her emotional isolation, her egocentrism. There might well be an intermediate step. According to L. S. Vygotsky, a contemporary of Piaget's who applied the Master's theories to language, the name-learning stage is followed by a period in which the child uses its new vocabulary to speak to itself, to encode its inner ideas. Vygotsky's theory embellished Heymann Steinthal's old formulation: perhaps, behind her inscrutability, Genie was building self-awareness—understanding herself as she was understood by others, for "that is the beginning of language." Through the summer and on into the fall, Susan Curtiss jotted down Genie's every utterance, all her sporadic, inchoate talk, and waited for the day when she might begin to reveal herself.—RUSS RYMER

(*This is the first part of a two-part article.*)

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Antic Dane

HEREWITH some impressions of Stephen Lang's startling Hamlet (particularly startling to one whose first of many Hamlets was John Gielgud) and of the "Hamlet" at the Roundabout, under Paul Weidner's direction. Mr. Lang is no melancholy Dane. It is the "antic disposition" that pervades this performance and, along with Mr. Lang's beard (if ever there was a clean-shaven role, it's Hamlet), gives it validity. There is no eloquence here—in the traditional sense, that is. There are no set pieces, yet nothing goes to waste. The soliloquies are never monologues addressed to the audience or to outer space but, coming from deep within, are always personal. I've never heard "How all occasions do inform against me," the least sympathetic of them, done better. Time after time, one asks oneself, Is this "antic disposition" feigned or have the horrors of the state of Denmark truly driven Hamlet crazy?

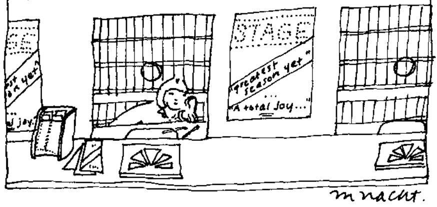
The production gets off to a rather shaky start when, in the first court scene, the Queen begs Hamlet to cast his "nighted color" off. Since all present are in mourning for the late King, Hamlet's color is no more nighted than anyone else's. (The Queen soon removes her black cloak to reveal a scarlet satin dress, but that's about it.) Once out of the palace, however, Hamlet appears wearing a headband and what looks like straw in his hair—a kind of hippie getup. "Give me that man that is not passion's slave," he says to Horatio, yet it is he who is passion's slave. In his scenes with Ophelia, he is beside himself (although we think he probably loves her). His cordiality in greeting Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, his old friends, provides a slight respite, but the cordiality quickly cools to suspicion when he realizes that they were "sent for," and he resumes his cockeyed behavior. There is humor in the performance but little wit or, come to think of it, princeliness; Hamlet is more participant than commentator. Yet this suffering, sardonic, edgy man, alert to every move and utterance around him, is brought to life by Mr. Lang. Whether he is Hamlet or not is in the mind and eye of the beholder.

The supporting company is well cast. Kathleen Widdoes is a wanton, sexy Gertrude; Elizabeth McGovern misses nothing of the charm and humor and eventual fragility and tragedy of Ophelia; Michael Genet's Horatio is staunch; Michael Cristofer's Claudius is wicked; and James Cromwell's Polonius is tall and controlled and dignified—anything but Hamlet's "rash, intruding fool." (I always tend to be pro-Polonius.) Bill Campbell, all youth and spirit, could have been put on earth for Laertes. Michael Galardi and MichaelJohn McGann, as Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, are not the usual Tweedledum and Tweedledee: Mr. Galardi is slim and modest; Mr. McGann is portly and authoritative, definitely the senior partner. John Newton makes a properly philosophical Gravedigger. When Hamlet holds up the skull and speaks of Yorick, the Gravedigger, recognizing the Prince, quietly removes his cap but says nothing. This is a telling, subtle touch on the part of Mr. Weidner, whose direction throughout is capable and invisible. To take a play that everyone knows by heart and make it seem new even for a few hours is no cinch, but Mr. Weidner (with a little help from Mr. Lang) accomplishes it. I felt deprived of poetry, yet, all in all, this is a "Hamlet" that works. The minimal, effective scenery was designed by Christopher H. Barreca and lighted by Natasha Katz; the effective costumes were designed by Martin Pakledinaz.

—EDITH OLIVER

The Old Switcheroo

"CONVERSATIONS WITH MY FATHER," the new Herb Gardner play, at the Royale, has one of those titles that make you think you know exactly what the play will be like: an old-fashioned bittersweet memory play in which a writer tries to come to terms with a difficult parent by depicting scenes from his childhood and talking to the audience a lot. "Conversations" *is* a memory play. In the opening scene, a man and his teen-age son have come back to the bar the man's parents ran for fifty years on Canal Street; the man—who is, in fact, a writer (though you don't find this out until quite late)—does talk to the audience; and his father—the Amanda Wingfield character—is a difficult guy. And there's no getting around the old-fashioned opening. As the play begins, Charlie (Tony Shalhoub) is waiting for his son, Josh (Tony Gillan), to come down from the old family apartment, above the bar. Josh is curious about the place, but Charlie wants to get out of there as quickly as possible. "What's the hurry?" asks the smart-aleck son. He retreats upstairs, and we get one of those gloriously hokey flashbacks: the lights change and saloon doors open, Judd Hirsch comes out with a tray full of glasses with little American flags stuck in them, and suddenly the year is 1936. Mr. Shalhoub takes a seat in one of the booths and looks on as his father tries to get a two-year-old Charlie to speak.



The setup, the flashback, the struggle between exacting father and recalcitrant child all make you think that the play is heading for some epic confrontation. But "Conversations with My Father" isn't about coming to terms with people and things so much as about capturing them. Almost nothing in Mr. Gardner's play is as you'd expect it to be. It's not phony and sentimental, like "Dancing at Lughnasa," or phony and self-serving, like "Jake's Women." Above all, the play isn't simplistic, and although it requires a large cast (twelve actors) and a vast, elaborate set, you don't leave the theatre with a sense of waste. The set—an evocation of the bar, designed by Tony Walton—is a concrete expression of the contradictions embodied in Eddie, the Judd Hirsch character, whose salient trait is inconsistency: a fondness for the sudden moral about-face, which Charlie as a precocious ten-year-old (David Krumholtz) calls the old "switcheroo." A survivor of Odessa's October, 1905, pogrom, Eddie wants his sons to go to Hebrew school, but he doesn't want them to wear their skullcaps on the way or to hear their mother (Gordana Rashovich) speaking Yiddish around the house. In 1936, he's just changed his name to

Eddie Ross (from Itzik Goldberg), and he hopes someday to make enough money to open a place uptown.

Of course, Eddie's dilemma about Jewish history and identity—is one better off nurturing anger or subduing it?—could just as easily be applied to Charlie's relationship with him, only it never is. That's what makes "Conversations with My Father" such a good play. Its point—as in so many of the "conversations," in which one party is incapable of speech or understanding—isn't so much what gets said as how the mind works and what it hangs on to. That "Conversations" engenders the feeling it does stems partly from Mr. Gardner's nimble-mindedness and partly from the facility of his director. Daniel Sullivan, whose staging is full of barroom tableaux that O'Neill would have killed for, has elicited notably restrained performances from an ace cast that includes Marilyn Sokol, William Biff McGuire, and Peter Gerety, as denizens of Eddie's tavern; David Margulies, as a Yiddish actor who boards with the family; John Procaccino and Richard E. Council, as a couple of heavies; and Jason Biggs and Mr. Gillan, as different versions of Charlie's brother, Joey. Most of them have only the briefest of scenes in which to make an impression, and some of them—like Mr. Shalhoub, Mr. Margulies, and Miss Sokol—have not always been known for their restraint.

Eddie never does move the bar uptown, so the set never really changes. Mr. Hirsch's wonderful, snarling performance is the play's other constant (a nice touch, given that his character is meant to stand for inconsistency). Everything else keeps changing, particularly our perspective on the issues the play purports to be about—whether you assimilate or cleave to your heritage, fight back or play it safe, remember or try to forget. If "Conversations with My Father" were a routine or formulaic Broadway play, it would discover that there are no easy answers. But that isn't something you need to go to the theatre to find out. Mr. Gardner is interested in revealing something about the beauty of the questions. —MIMI KRAMER

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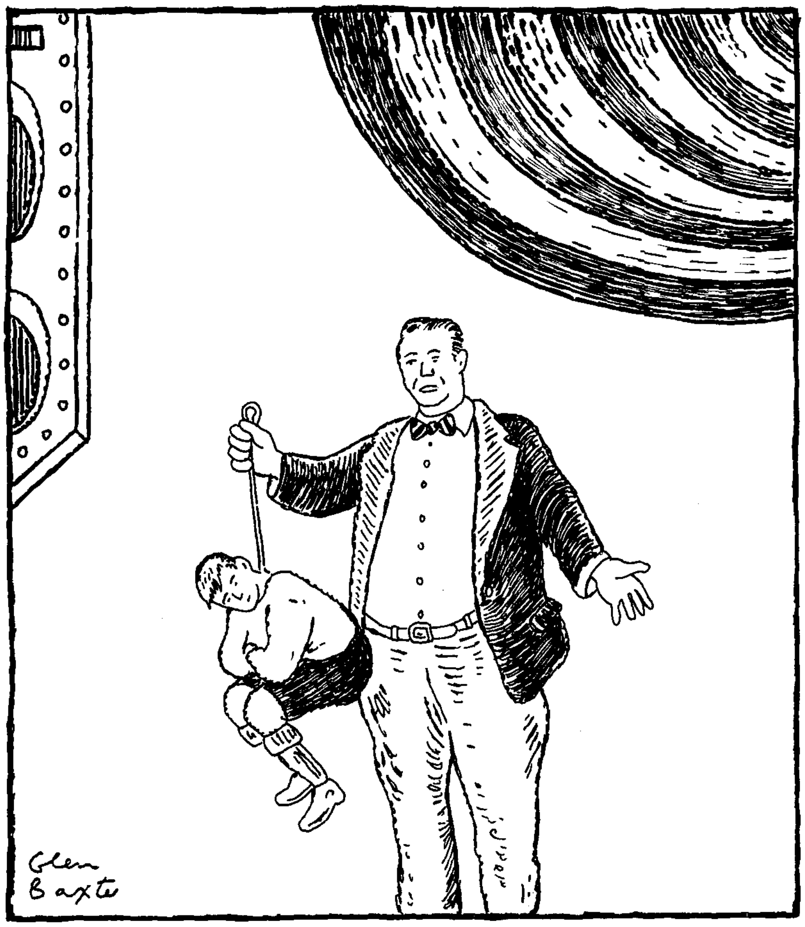
POPULAR MUSIC

Urban Cowboys

THE first Cowboy Junkies album, a set of bluesy covers called "Whites Off Earth Now!!," was recorded in 1986 on one microphone in a garage in one afternoon for less than five hundred dollars. The album was finished so quickly that the Junkies—the Timmins siblings Michael, Margo, and Peter, and their pal Alan Anton—even had time for a barbecue before the day was over. Their modus operandi was simple: the guys in the band would jam for a while, and Margo would improvise some vocals over the music, almost always adopting the words of Robert Johnson, John Lee Hooker, or Lightnin' Hopkins but occasionally throwing in a simple lyrical sentiment of her own. Michael Timmins wrote of the album, "Originally no one in the band was interested in writing original songs, but we always felt that these so called cover songs that we were doing were original in every aspect except for the written word." This was, of course, the musical path that had been taken by the likes of Eric Clapton, John Mayall, and Paul Butterfield: they began by messing with the blues masters just for the fun of it and eventually developed compositions of their own. But, unlike most bands that work in this Spartan manner—minimum equipment, maximum motivation—Cowboy Junkies were not creating grungy garage rock. Margo's vocals were icy and precise, and the music was strikingly elegant, with a prettiness in the sound which outshone the baroque effects that other bands tried to produce in the studio.



FOR A FEW YEARS, I MANAGED TO EKE OUT A MEAGRE LIVING AS "THE HUMAN YO-YO."

Directness, simplicity, and effortlessness have continued to characterize the Junkies' work, Margo's voice always sounding slighter than a whisper over the band's carefree, languorous country-blues rhythms. When the Junkies were on—as they were for most of their second album, "The Trinity Session," an acclaimed major-label début released by RCA in 1988—they were the perfect after-hours band, just the thing for coming down from a party high and contemplating the inevitable morning-after hangover. When the band was off—as was the case with most of its third album, "The Caution Horses," in 1990, which was its first attempt to work in a studio—its chilly, eerie peacefulness became simply sluggish, like Muzak for hipsters. "The Caution Horses" was what gave Cowboy Junkies a reputation as Thorazine rockers: it was as if the band had been knocked out with a pharmaceutical punch and hadn't quite regained consciousness.

Still, it seemed that everyone was seduced by "The Trinity Session," which, like its predecessor, was recorded cheaply—this time, in a church in Toronto, the group's home town. The album consisted mostly of cover songs, featuring a portentous, lonesome a-cappella version of the traditional folk ballad "Mining for Gold," a gray, moody "Walking After Midnight," a spooky, sentimental "Blue Moon," and a rendition of Hank Williams' "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry" that's as mournful as the original. RCA's small investment yielded a near-platinum album, an MTV hit—a languid cover of Lou Reed's "Sweet Jane"—and a cult of Margo-loving men. No question, her liquid voice was softly sexy, but it was the tangle of curly hair and the big bright eyes and an over-all Princess Diana-like, medium-cool demeanor that landed Margo in *Esquire's* roster of "Women We Love" and in a special issue of *People* listing "The 50 Most Beautiful People in the World."

When "The Caution Horses" came out, it was clear that, despite the album's weaknesses, Michael Timmins had emerged as a brilliant songwriter, a gifted student of the Bob Dylan–Bruce Springsteen school. On the best songs, like "Sun Comes Up, It's Tuesday Morning" and " 'Cause Cheap Is How I Feel," he displayed a rare gift for lyrical narratives that find just the right details to evoke an entire mood in one or two lines. The former song, told from the point of view of a woman who wakes up one morning soon after a breakup and decides it's not so bad to be alone, uses under-

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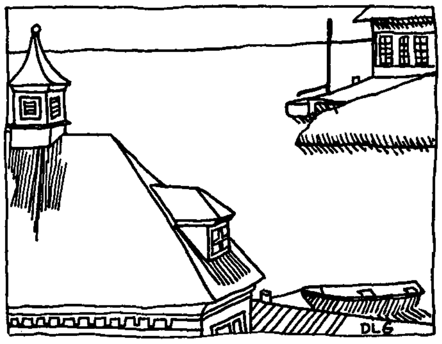
stated description to show that the real pain at the end of a love affair may not be the emotional loss so much as the difficulty of shaking old habits. "Lunchtime. I start to dial your number/then I remember so I reach for something to smoke," Margo sings. "And anyways I'd rather listen to Coltrane/than go through all that shit again." A less skilled songwriter taking us through the woman's day might paint an overwhelming emptiness in broad, bathetic strokes, but Timmins zeroes in on petty annoyances: the blinds are open to the rising sun's rays, and there's no milk in the refrigerator for morning coffee, because the woman hasn't yet got used to taking care of those matters for herself. Any excerpt from "Sun Comes Up" proves that Michael Timmins is a formidable musical poet. "Maybe tonight it's a movie/with plenty of room for elbows and knees/a bag of popcorn all to myself,/black and white with a strong female lead/and if I don't like it, no debate, I'll leave," Margo sings triumphantly toward the end of the song, which concludes, "Sure I'll admit there are times when I miss you/especially like now when I need someone to hold me/but there are some things that can never be forgiven/and I've just got to tell you/that I kind of like these extra few feet in my bed."

If the music couldn't quite stand up to the lyrics, which were certainly the smartest and most literate to appear on a pop album in a long while, perhaps it was because the technological trappings of the studio didn't quite fit the Junkies that first time out. In any case, their new album, "Black Eyed Man" (RCA), their second studio attempt, is strong on all counts. Where the drone of "The Caution Horses" was fatiguing, the tunefulness of "Black Eyed Man" is downright infectious. A friend of mine bought the album one Saturday afternoon and swears she played it twelve times in a row. For what it's worth, I've been listening to "Black Eyed Man" more or less daily since an advance tape was sent to me a few months ago, and the choruses of songs like "Southern Rain" (which is the first single) and "A Horse in the Country" and the frightening saga "Murder, Tonight, in the Trailer Park" (the second single) have pretty much tattooed themselves on my brain.

One of the most pleasing transformations on this album is that the new kick in the band's sound—which is basically what you'd call mellow country rock, although compared with "The Caution Horses" the new album sounds like the product of speed freaks—has energized Margo's voice. In the bridge of "Oregon Hill," in which the singer assumes the persona of a man who's spending a weekend furlough from prison with his girlfriend, Margo busts completely loose from her usual reserve, as if she'd suddenly realized that although Princess Di might have the mystique, it's boisterous Fergie who gets to really live. The lines "Baptists celebrating with praises to the Lord,/rednecks doing it with gin./Me and Suzy, we're celebrating/the joy of sleeping in" ought to ring out with bold mischief, and indeed they do. The title of the final track, "To Live Is to Fly," which extols the happiness of taking off, might be the album's motto.

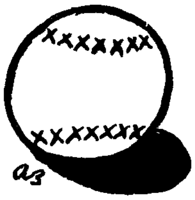
"Black Eyed Man" certainly has its sombre moments, most of them occurring on the second half of the album, and even the upbeat songs never really get beyond a happy-sad ambivalence. "A Horse in the Country," about a woman filled with middle-class ennui, whose one big joy is visiting her horse every other weekend ("One day I'll saddle up/and the two of us will ride away"), canters right along, never quite achieving the gallop that would make Cowboy Junkies an altogether different band. While this is an album that favors motion over inertia, the most striking emotional state conveyed on "Black Eyed Man" is a distant disturbedness; horrifying situations are viewed more as curious, strange, and perplexing than as anything personal. This is particularly true of the title track and of "Murder, Tonight, in the Trailer Park," both of which involve crime and danger but mostly to indulge in the film-noir mystery of it all rather than to consider any moral consequences. "Southern Rain," which is sustained by a fuzzy guitar riff throughout, is about dreamy people whose lives could have and should have worked out better than they did. One is a woman who left a small town in Georgia to run off with a West Coast lawyer and is contemplating the less than happy outcome several years later—"Every night there's lipstick on his collar/every morning I wash it away"—but her response isn't sorrow or dismay; it's nearer to disinterested confusion, a postmodern "*C'est la vie.*" Perhaps because Michael Timmins writes about landscapes that must be unfamiliar to him, his compelling narratives often lack a believable emotional content.



While the best songs on "Black Eyed Man" happen to be these dark shadows—if only because they are so damn catchy—the real reservoirs of feeling are in the slower ballads. The moody dance of "This Street, That Man, This Life" meanders its way through a series of images that are impressively surreal ("That man wears his skin/like a dancer wears her veils./That man stalks his victim/like a cancer stalks a cell"). But it's the song's simple conclusion, which is free of fancy wordplay, that strikes the deepest chord: the lines "This life has its victories/but its defeats tear so viciously" tell an instinctive, unpremeditated truth that seems more heartfelt than anything else on "Black Eyed Man."

MARGO TIMMINS has claimed that the singer she'd most like to emulate is Emmylou Harris, and this ambition seems appropriate, for they both have uncommon musical intelligence and taste. Though neither Timmins nor Harris has ever been much of a songwriter (Margo collaborated with Michael on some of the songs on "The Trinity Session," but his solo compositions are usually superior), Harris's interpretations of Gram Parsons, of the bluegrass pioneer Bill Monroe, and even of Bruce Springsteen do for those writers' songs exactly what Timmins does for her brother's compositions. (These days, a rock artist is rarely signed to a label if she doesn't do her own composing, yet not so long ago Joan Baez's renditions of Bob Dylan, Bonnie Raitt's reworkings of blues classics, and Janis Joplin's covers of just about everybody were considered works of art on their own merits.)

But when Timmins says that she wants to sing like Harris I'm sure she's referring more to vocal quality than to interpretative skills. Like Timmins, Harris has a voice that never sounds forced: she just opens her mouth and pretty sounds seem to purr out ever so gently—but her singing has always had a certain strength and cogency that Timmins' lacked until "Black Eyed Man." On this album, she has occasional moments of near-howling—on "Murder, Tonight, in the Trailer Park" and "Townes' Blues" (written for the Texas songwriter Townes Van Zandt, who contributed two tracks to "Black Eyed Man"). While Harris's own albums showed off her lilting soprano well enough, her work as a background singer was often still more affecting: like Linda Ronstadt's harmonies on the songs of Neil Young and Paul Simon, Harris's singing with Parsons, Roy Orbison, Lyle Lovett, and any number of others has many times turned a decent song into a gorgeous, rangy piece of music. Though "Black Eyed Man" brings Timmins closer to her goal, she still has some way to go before she's as good as Harris. (Coincidentally, Harris's new album, "At the Ryman," recorded live at the previous home of the Grand Ole Opry, has just been released by Reprise; with a lineup of tunes that range from Stephen Foster's dirgelike "Hard Times" to Steve Earle's twangy "Guitar Town" and Nanci Griffith's meditative "It's a Hard Life Wherever You Go," this album shows the scope of her brilliant career.)



The comparison between Margo Timmins and Emmylou Harris is apt for another reason. To the field of country music Harris has always brought a touch of sophistication. She was a purist who was staunchly traditional before it was fashionable to be, who let her hair go gray and never resorted to the hokey show-biz tactics that Robert Altman parodied so well in "Nashville." While Harris was born and grew up in Birmingham, Alabama, she got her real start not in the Deep South but in the folk scene around Washington, D.C. She first made a name for herself in the early seventies, singing with Gram Parsons, a Harvard dropout and a suicidal rebel; Parsons, who died of a drug overdose after recording a handful of albums, blended down-home country with solid rock, and forcefully rejected the kitschy leanings of the country-music establishment long before Ricky Skaggs and Dwight Yoakam made the back-to-basics movement a fad. Harris remains one of the country icons who have never sold out, and her independence has left her free to record traditional Appalachian folk tunes and Beatles songs and to sing with everybody from Buck Owens to The Band. For her efforts, Harris is now the president of the Country Music Foundation and was recently made a member of the Grand Ole Opry.

And Harris's treatment of country music has surely influenced Cowboy Junkies, those urban and urbane Canadians who can't seem to keep themselves from singing about characters who come from Macon, Georgia, and live in trailer parks and make references to the great-grandsons of General Robert E. Lee. There is a time-honored tradition in rock music of Canadians' having a fascination with the Deep South, from Neil Young, with his contemplations of the "Southern Man," to The Band's ballad "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down." The South and its history and legends have a hold on the creative imagination which seems to intensify the farther north you get. That's why in any touring country band the guy in the biggest cowboy hat is always from some place like Boston, and Cowboy Junkies are probably more true to the spirit of country music than Garth Brooks or Clint Black could ever hope to be.

Of course, the idea that the purists are more likely to be outsiders than those to the manner born is nothing new; after all, if you were Dolly Parton and came from a tiny town and a poor family you'd probably find the glitz and excess of Las Vegas enticing, too. Woody Guthrie's largest following was always the lefty intellectuals who revered the working class as they sat in their coffeehouses and dreamed of becoming labor organizers. It was not until the Vietnam War, when collegiate protesters were beaten up by construction workers who voted for Nixon and supported our involvement in Southeast Asia, that the misguidedness of the élite in believing they could speak for Everyman was exposed for

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—Ralph Waldo Emerson

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what it was. With this scenario in mind, it does seem perfectly fair to ask what on earth the middle-class, Toronto-bred Cowboy Junkies are doing playing a song like "Murder, Tonight, in the Trailer Park"—a song whose title alone resonates with cinematic, Sam Shepardish clichés about people who are poor but have values and character and love and were dealt an unfair hand by fate. Once again, the simple, hapless, and helpless working person is being glorified in a fashion that, considering the source, seems a bit condescending.

While this element of condescension is something of a problem when Cowboy Junkies record their original songs, another issue comes up when they cover the classics. "Blue Moon" and "Walking After Midnight" may be timeless songs to some factions of the music audience, but hip young rock fans see them as campy and corny—songs to be performed not with love and affection but with winking irony. If Cowboy Junkies' albums were meant for consumption by the people who've been buying all those Garth Brooks records, "The Trinity Session" would have come across as a sincere musical tribute. Marketed, as it was, to a college audience, "The Trinity Session" was kind of confusing: Were the Junkies trying to play these nostalgia tunes in a way that would mean something to contemporary audiences, or were they just making fun of them?

Most likely, it's the former—though it's possible that the band members didn't think any of this through, and just played songs they liked to play, and hoped that people would respond. Whatever the case, I remember being turned off by "The Trinity Session" when it first came out, mainly because I found it preposterous that Cowboy Junkies could be so serious about what I thought was such dated material. I changed my mind about the band a couple of years ago, when RCA reissued "Whites Off Earth Now!!," which sounded so good to me—immediate and raw and edgy—that it hardly seemed worthwhile to try to figure out what Cowboy Junkies "meant" by this album of cover songs. One music critic said to me at the time of the reissue that he had too much respect for Lightnin' Hopkins and John Lee Hooker and Robert Johnson to tolerate the way Cowboy Junkies were refurbishing their songs—as if you had to be black, or from the Mississippi Delta, or a heroin addict to be considered a "real" bluesman.

The point is that these arguments about who has a right to interpret certain material—which is to say, who has a genuine claim on any particular musical heritage or who is truly able to *feel* the blues—tend to get bogged down in their own reverse snobbery. "Whites Off Earth Now!!" is good because it's good to listen to, period. I played and replayed that first record so much that I decided to give "The Trinity Session" another try, and this time I realized that it sounded pretty good, too. The video revolution has allowed rock fans to respond to a band's image as much as to its music, but it's important to remember that the listening experience is supposed to be about good songs played well. For this reason, no one should ever fault the music of Emmylou Harris or Gram Parsons for being less true-blue country than, say, the music of a real Texas farm boy like Willie Nelson, whose schmalzy duet with Julio Iglesias was hardly in the spirit of honky-tonk. In the end, the art ought to count for more than the artist.

Cowboy Junkies force upon us a criterion for judging music which is in many ways irrational. The first lesson that every high-school freshman gets in a writing class is to stick to what you know, and the Junkies flout this guideline in just about everything they do. "The Caution Horses," with only two cover songs ("Powderfinger" and "You Will Be Loved Again," by the group's compatriots Neil Young and Mary Margaret O'Hara, respectively), is the only Junkies album that has a deeply personal feel to it, and it's as dull as death. But give the band characters from places far beyond its own back yard, and Margo's vocals sound confident and full-bodied, and the band plays with a surefooted ease that is delightful and splendid. And that's pretty much what happens on "Black Eyed Man." It may not be an album full of literal, or even emotional, truths, but what it does deliver makes for consistently pleasurable listening—something far too rare in any type of music today.

—Elizabeth Wurtzel

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LETTER FROM JAPAN

It is not very often that Westerners get to see the Japanese just as they are. The difficulty we have when we look at Japan—the layers-of-the-onion problem—can be so frustrating that we tend to raise our own screen of assumptions and expectations, or we content ourselves with images of the Japanese as they would like to be seen. If you live in Japan, you learn to value moments of clarity—times when you feel as if you'd walked into a room where someone is talking to himself and doesn't know you're there.

Over the last five years, the yachtsmen of Nippon Challenge—the sailing syndicate representing Japan in the America's Cup races off San Diego this spring—have provided just such an occasion: a moment of national revelation. Nippon Challenge is intended by its managers, sponsors, and sailors to be a display of new and unfamiliar ambitions felt by the Japanese. It is also intended to reveal Japan's capacity to fulfill those ambitions. The lavish imagery associated with competitive yachting—skippers with the sensitivity of artists, crews pitted against time and the elements—no longer adequately reflects the reality of a complex sailing campaign. Yet it holds enormous appeal for the Japanese. Because racing for the America's Cup requires them to do so many things they have never even attempted before, they see in it a chance to respond to the urgent question that is implicit in most of what we have to say to them these days: Can Japan and the Japanese change? The campaign also reminds us, though, of how easily symbols can be mistaken for substance when we look at the Japanese, because the Japanese generally do not distinguish between the two.

It is a result of their peculiar history that the Japanese, although island dwellers, are not a seafaring people. Until the seventeenth century, Japan had been well on its way to building a seaborne empire as extensive as that of Portugal, Spain, or Holland. Its ships were comparable in size, if not sophistication, to any then being constructed in the West, and its trade routes stretched to what are now Indonesia and India and to the coast of Africa. But the Tokugawa shogunate, which lasted from 1603 until 1868, changed all that. By 1640, its policy of *sakoku*, or isolation, had virtually closed the Japanese islands to the outside world. The sea became known as a perilous place, and those who lived beyond it as aggressive, barbaric people. In many rather obvious ways, this view continues to color Japan's attitudes toward the world beyond its shores.

The Japan with which we are all familiar is a trading nation of unparalleled reach, but it remains a nation of people living with their backs to the sea. One can earn a living by doing business across the ocean, but that is a matter of commercial necessity, and it directly involves few. The art and science of sailing have been largely ignored—left alone as the preserve of a few passionate pioneers. Until quite recently, official policy encouraged such neglect. In the early postwar years, all but the smallest sailboats were classified as luxury items and were taxed at a rate of forty per cent. Sailors talk about that tax today the way they might have talked about *sakoku* in another age: it meant they couldn't participate in many of the regattas held around the world each year and couldn't organize a serious regatta of their own. You understand how slowly Japan has come to recognize itself as a nation of great wealth when they tell you that the tax on sailboats was not fully removed until April 1, 1989.

There is also the nature of sailing to consider. If the sport can be said to require one quality above any other, that quality is flexibility in the face of changing circumstances: no two days on the water are ever the same. Whatever else it is, yacht racing is a test of one's ability to react to a situation that is always unpredictable. A lengthy competitive campaign—preparing for and racing for the America's Cup, for instance—means being willing to drop everything and to start anew in response to technical discoveries, altered weather conditions, or a surprise development on the part of an opponent. It requires a dedication to competing and to winning which allows nothing else to matter.

For all these reasons, sailing is not a sport for which the Japanese are particularly well conditioned. Since the Meiji Restoration opened the modern era, a hundred and twenty-four years ago, their way of dealing with the world has been to prepare at home, behind closed doors, and wait to challenge opponents at a moment when they can be quickly dominated. Their commitment is not to flexibility but to a process. This philosophy is part of what used to be called *wakon yosai*, meaning "Japanese spirit, Western things." I've never seen the term used outside history books, but it was one of the essential creeds of the Meiji years. *Wakon yosai* meant learning from abroad how to bake bread, brew beer, or build an army, or how to write a constitution without letting such notions as democracy and individual choice disrupt traditional values and attitudes—the web of duties and obligations which keeps the Japanese living in a rigidly defined hierarchy of authority. *Wakon yosai* enabled Japan to modernize in an extraordinarily brief time—a matter

of decades—and in our own age, of course, the philosophy has been applied in industry after industry with evident success. But it has come up short whenever creativity or ingenuity was required. *Wakon yosai* has not, for instance, produced the kind of inner-driven individuals needed to steer a yacht to victory.

When you look at the America's Cup in this light, it's hard to think of anything else that so neatly confronts the Japanese with so many challenges to their way of doing things. That is what has made their America's Cup venture so curious a phenomenon to observe. In our troubled relations with Japan, we clamor for changes in trade regulations and business practices, though what fundamentally separates us is differences of psychology and method, and divergent views of what competition is all about. You can't win the America's Cup by copying, for instance, because the technology moves too fast. How, then, is a nation historically reliant on learning from abroad supposed to build an America's Cup yacht? Finding the right crew poses a similar problem. It's a plain contradiction to apply *wakon yosai* to the task of assembling a team of sailors driven by a desire to compete.

These have been formidable problems for the Japanese. Until Nippon Challenge, no one in Japan had even attempted to design a yacht of the size and sophistication required by the America's Cup. As for Japanese sailors, they've accumulated a mixed record, at best, in the few world-class events in which they've raced. It isn't simply a question of physical ability—although Japanese have often told me that physiology is the main problem. The more important deficiency is that of attitude. The Japanese do not value winning the way it is valued in the West. Instead of passion and desire, they bring to sports a sense of *asobi*, which means play, participation, doing one's best as a Japanese. They prefer contests that end up with a prize for everybody. In sumo wrestling, for instance, there is not just a winning trophy but a *kanto-sho*, a trophy for "good achievement"; a *doryoku-sho*, for "good effort"; and a *gino-sho*, for "good technique."

Since I began following Nippon Challenge, almost two years ago, the word *gambatte* has also struck me as an important key to Japanese attitudes. *Gambatte* is normally used the way "Good luck!" is used in English: you say it to someone at the start of an endeavor. But its broader meaning is "Persist, try harder, stick with it," and the implication is "Think long-term." If you don't succeed this time, there is the next time, and the time after that. "*Gambatte!*" is a familiar salutation in the corridors of corporate Japan—you hear it all the time in Tokyo. And a long-term perspective is, of course, one of the reasons for the nation's economic success. But the America's Cup isn't contested by corporations—not directly, at least. The expression that has traditionally been associated with the Cup since its beginning, in 1851, is "There is no second."

To me, the difference between *asobi* and *gambatte*, on the one hand, and "There is no second," on the other, says everything you need to know about why the Japanese might well have decided to stay away from the expensive and obsessive, all-or-nothing world of the America's Cup. It's simply too much a game for the *gaijin*, the "outside people." But the very notion of the Cup as somehow off limits is what drove the syndicate's organizers forward. Nippon Challenge is as much a Japanese product of the nineteen-eighties as the fabulous art acquisitions, the corporate takeovers, and the huge property purchases in major Western cities are. It is partly an announcement to the rest of us that the long Japanese effort to catch up with the West, begun during the Meiji era, has finally succeeded. "It had to do with the times," a sailor named Taro Kimura once told me of the sailing syndicate's first days. "There was an inevitability about it. Everyone felt that now we can do this, now we can afford it—whatever it happened to be. We had wealth, but we wanted to find some other value in life besides working and producing. That was a common perception among the Japanese."

Taro Kimura has offered many such comments in the years I've known him. More than almost anyone else in the Japanese campaign, he is eager to attach some larger meaning to the enterprise. Kimura has been part of Nippon Challenge since its beginning, when it consisted of nothing more than a few middle-aged executives with a passion for yachting and a dream of competing for the sport's premier prize. Kimura, who is well travelled and speaks English flawlessly, is a noted TV anchorman; one of his many American friends once called him the Ted Koppel of Japan, and it is as good a description as any. Because he has an easy manner and a made-for-television smile, Kimura early on assumed a variety of public-relations duties, one of which was to cultivate sponsors prepared to finance the syndicate. It has been a curious exercise, he says, and he has found himself less a hard-selling impresario than a kind of house ideologue. Though Kimura's object was simply to finance a sailing syndicate, accomplishing that meant transforming Nippon Challenge—symbolically, at least—into something that it might otherwise not have become.

When Kimura began trying to bring sponsors on board, his promotional material consisted of a slightly blurred brochure made on a borrowed four-color photocopier, and a homemade video produced with footage lifted from the library at his television network. Thus armed, Kimura laid out the commercial and public-relations benefits that would accrue to corporations supporting Japan's first America's Cup challenge. As a marketing strategy, it seemed eminently sound. In mid-1987, however, this approach got Kimura nowhere. Cheap capital was abundant then, and corporate sponsorships were the rage. But the kind of friction between Japan and the United States which we now seem to take for granted was just beginning, and all that Kimura heard from business friends was "What if we win this thing? What then?"

Kimura remains proud of the way he answered that question. One evening at his home in Zushi, a seaside town an hour's train ride south of Tokyo, he decided to write an imaginary newspaper editorial. It was his idea of what the New York *Times* would publish the day after Nippon Challenge won the America's Cup. Shortly after I met Kimura, he handed me a copy of what he had written, as a kind of primer on the Japanese campaign. "This proves the Japanese aren't monsters," he said. The editorial read:

> Japan, long pushed to increase its imports, has just spent $15 million to bring home an old vase. It won't reduce the trade surplus, but it surely is more significant than $15 million worth of purchases overseas. The vase proves that the Japanese are not monsters, economic animals, but human beings like ourselves.
>
> The America's Cup is, in a sense, the world's greatest meaningless event. You invest millions, but all you get back, if you win, is the old silver vase. It requires the latest technology, but it is technology that does not necessarily enrich our daily lives right away. The young people who fought in the race won't even get a medal, as in the Olympic Games. However, we in the West have pursued this race because we think man is distinguished as the only creature that can be enthusiastic about meaningless things.
>
> Japan has given us the best in television sets, Walkman stereos, and cars, but sometimes we have found it difficult to decide whether the Japanese are really human beings. They seem to have sacrificed their individual lives to contribute to their companies. They are rational people, a people who are careful not to waste, but they seem too inhuman.
>
> Now the Japanese have made a huge investment in the world's greatest meaningless event, and they have done so even more enthusiastically than we have. They have happily returned home with the Cup that bears no correspondence to their investment in getting it.
>
> The meaning for us is simple: we have discovered through the America's Cup that the people upon whom much of the world's future depends are also human beings.

I've never been able to decide whether Kimura's editorial fantasy was taken up out of extreme idealism (rare in corporate Japan) or extreme cynicism (somewhat more common), but, in any case, it's obvious that he struck just the right gong. His imaginary *Times* piece has been an essential marketing device. When Kimura started his recruiting, Nippon Challenge hoped for ten official sponsors to contribute a hundred million yen each—about seven hundred thousand dollars at the time. When the syndicate arrived in San Diego, a little more than a year ago, it had thirty official sponsors, each one in for a hundred and fifty million yen; forty-three "honorary sponsors," "official suppliers," and "co-suppliers," each of which made contributions of its own; and thousands of individual supporters.

TATSUMITSU YAMASAKI is the *kaicho*, or chairman, of Nippon Challenge—a highly appropriate choice, because he is a man of so many contradictions. Like Japan itself, he is purposeful but lacking in initiative. He is decisive but uncertain of his direction. And he is confident but something less than ambitious. Once, during a visit to the sailing crew in San Diego, Yamasaki announced with pride, "I can assure you all now that there will be a second Japanese challenge for the America's Cup after this one." No one said anything. Weeks later, with undisguised humility in his gravelly voice, the *kaicho* pulled me aside and said, "Patrick-*san*, I regret saying that now. I worry. Maybe they'll think I'm not concerned about winning." Most contradictory of all, Tatsu Yamasaki is a leader who has never learned to shape events but, rather, is led by them.

Yamasaki, a slightly built man with a steady gaze, is fifty-seven. One of his favorite memories, he once told me, is of a speech his father, who was a prominent Tokyo merchant, gave during the mid-nineteen-fifties. Called upon to recount his early days, the elder Yamasaki explained that when he built his first factory, at the age of forty, he dreamed for the first time—a dream of his own fortune. When he was fifty, the war was over, and he dreamed again, this time of Japan. His sixtieth year was now approaching, he said, and he hoped that he would have one more dream and that it would be a dream of the world. In a curious way, the memory reveals a lot about Tatsu Yamasaki. His life seems to consist of living the better part of all those dreams. For many years now, he has headed his family's business, a producer of seasonings and packaged foods called the S & B Shokuhin Company, which has expanded steadily outward from Japan over the years. Yamasaki is also an avid yachtsman. His racing record is less than brilliant, but he has made up for it with a magnetic personality, a pronounced taste for high living, and a well-developed sense of *asobi*—a fervor for simply being there, win or lose.

I doubt whether Yamasaki has completely abandoned the skepticism he felt when Taro Kimura and a few other yachtsmen first approached him with the idea of entering Japan in the America's Cup. In 1983, they had all watched the sloop Australia II race to victory off Newport, Rhode Island, and take the Cup away from the New York Yacht Club for the first time in the event's hundred-and-thirty-two-year

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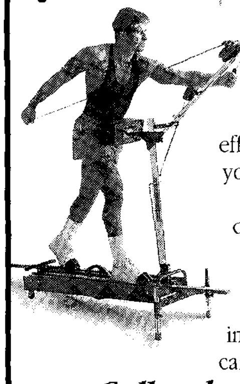

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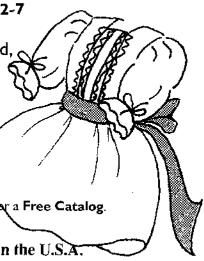

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history. It had then seemed to them only a matter of time before Japan entered its first challenge. But Yamasaki doubted whether a hundred Japanese had even seen an America's Cup race, and he knew that no one in Japan had ever owned a Twelve-Metre yacht, the class in which the Cup was contested at the time. It would take ten years to mount a challenge, he figured, and twenty to win a race. "We had no real sailors back then," Yamasaki told me. "We had no real technology to build a Twelve, no real capacity to study sails, no real experience in match racing. These were all reasons for me to be negative, and I was. Back then, I was a bit of a coward."

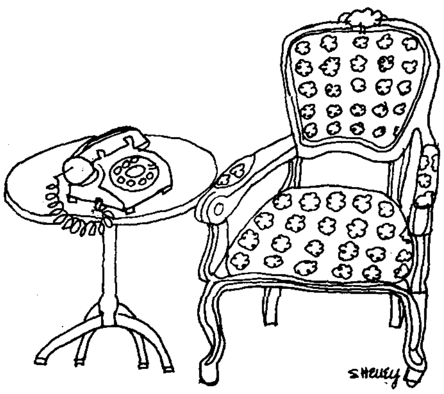
An American yachtsman who has watched Nippon Challenge for most of its life told Yamasaki at the beginning that the task of getting to San Diego could be divided into three categories: there were people, there were things, and there was money. Yamasaki has made the acquisition of the necessary *hito*, *mono*, and *kane*—as the three terms translate into Japanese—the basis for his operations over the past five years. But his methodical approach has, ironically, enabled him to preserve his romantic notion of the Cup. Consequently, he has never really understood the deep water into which Nippon Challenge has sailed. In practice, he has approached the America's Cup as if it were no more than another race in his long career on the water, the only differences being that it requires more *kane* and attracts more television cameras.

One of the things Yamasaki was most eager to recount when I met him was the selection of the syndicate's initial crew. I've heard the story repeatedly, from different people, and never without feeling that this first foray into international racing has been taken as a great moral lesson by all who were involved. Yamasaki picked the most reliable sailors he knew and chartered them a Twelve-Metre. He named them the Seven Samurai and, in April, 1987, entered them in a regatta then called the Citizen Cup—it is now the Steinlager Cup—which is held each spring in Auckland Harbor.

Auckland was a disaster. The Seven Samurai finished the week zero for nine. Early in the series, the crew members concluded that they were simply not strong enough to compete. It was obvious that they couldn't handle the boat, and that the rough New Zealand seas were too much for them. What seems to have distressed the Japanese most, though, was the unfamiliar business of winning and losing. The impact of encountering this new concept has come through in every account of Auckland that I've heard, though it is understandably a difficult notion for the Japanese to articulate about themselves. Makoto Namba, a tall, earnest, and deferential man who is still with Nippon Challenge, remembered the moment of recognition vividly nearly five years and many races later. "The feeling was different in Auckland," he said, sounding a little stunned. "You survived or you didn't. No more middle of the pack. It was very easy to get frustrated, very easy to panic, very easy to blow it. And that's what we did."

To understand Nippon Challenge's *hito* problem—the problem of finding people capable of competing in world-class events—requires some knowledge of Japanese yachting history, brief though it is. Japan's first yacht club was started only in 1922, toward the end of an unusually liberal era, during which Western influence was at a height it would not reach again until the postwar occupation years. Within a decade, the first two university sailing clubs had been founded, and a tradition began that has exercised a heavy influence ever since on the sport as it is practiced in Japan.

Sailing clubs are an interesting social phenomenon. They teach harmony, hierarchy, and duty, and so, in effect, constitute a small part of the complex machinery by which traditional Japanese values are passed from one generation to the next. A boat crewed by graduates of these collegiate clubs will be sailed pretty much the way a Japanese company is run. The question of clubs has subtly divided the syndicate, I think, ever since the Auckland debacle. Tatsu Yamasaki loves them, and so does Taro Kimura. Both men attended Meiji-era universities that maintain a kind of Oxford-Cambridge rivalry in yachting, and they both respect the clubs' tradition of college-boy cruelty, cold rice, and rugged discipline. When I asked Yamasaki once if sailing clubs didn't instill a counterproductive restraint in Japanese sailors, he gave me a blank look.



Others in the syndicate are strongly opposed to the clubs, and among those opponents is Kaoru Ogimi, another of Nippon Challenge's top executives. Ogimi earned his degree at Reed College, in Portland, Oregon, and never sailed in a collegiate club. "The clubs don't teach sailors to develop any keen sense of how to get the maximum out of the machine in changing wind conditions," he said when we discussed the subject. "The driving ethic is simply to obey those above. Succeeding means learning to become an efficient cog. The yacht, the machine, is owned not by the sailors but by the school. It's beyond the individual to tinker, test, and tune it to his satisfaction. In the clubs, you're not taught to elevate your art. Quite frankly, you'll never win a yacht race that way."

Ogimi, who is sixty-two, has a caustic manner, and often seems on the brink of throwing up his hands and giving up on the Japanese. He was born of mixed parentage—his mother is a Londoner by birth—and spent much of his childhood overseas. He is also among Japan's few truly experienced yachtsmen. In the opinion of many *gaijin* who know him, he would have made a superb *kaicho*. Having watched him sail, instruct, manage, and navigate his way through many gatherings of international yachting figures, I have to agree. Ogimi sees everything with two pairs of eyes—as both a *gaijin* and a *nihonjin*, or Japanese. He would have made an excellent guide for Japan's initial America's Cup challenge. But in a world that turns partly on the duality of *uchi* and *soto*—inside and outside—he is a somewhat *soto* figure. This lends him, beneath his gruff persona, a genuine kindness and an unmistakable vulnerability. In the syndicate, he must stand to the side. Ogimi can get his ideas across only when they have been separated from him and adopted by someone else.

After Auckland, everyone knew that Nippon Challenge could not draw its crew from Sagami Bay, a broad inlet south of Tokyo where the Japanese sailing scene has always been centered. Virtually all the yachtsmen sailing out of the Sagami Bay clubs and marinas had been through the university system. Yamasaki considered it a simple matter of brawn; Auckland, he believed, showed that there were few Sagami Bay sailors strong enough to handle an America's Cup yacht. Ogimi was less concerned with size than with finding unmolded clay—people of independent spirit. He talked about the young people whom the Japanese call *shinjinrui* as the answer to Nippon Challenge's problems. The term translates neatly as "new breed," although the Japanese usually insist that its more accurate meaning is "new species of human being." The *shinjinrui*, who range in age from the mid-teens to the mid-twenties, are a generation whose values are a puzzle to most of the nation. They consume rather than save. They travel a lot and care little for lifetime employment with large corporations. When the *shinjinrui* first came to notice, in the late eighties, they seemed to indicate that something had snapped in Japanese society. They did things for different reasons, and displayed no interest in dedicating themselves to furthering the nation's economic strength; Japan's superiority in the marketplace was something they seemed to take for granted.

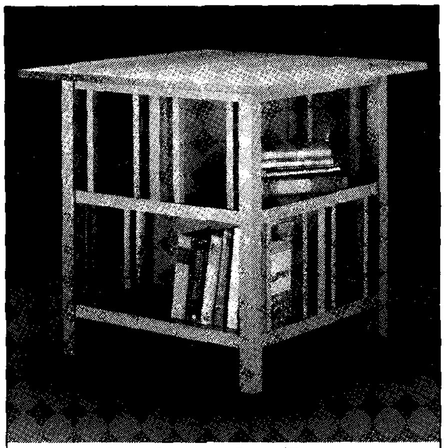
ME
ME
YOU
AVOINE

The *shinjinrui* are still with us. The younger ones tend to wear spiky hair, and the older ones make their way around Tokyo in German cars and exaggeratedly styled Italian suits. Most foreigners and more than a few Tokyoites consider the new breed a mere exercise in form without content. Ogimi disagrees. "If you go beyond the superficialities, this is not a normal generation gap," he once explained to me. "Japan has been a modern state for only three generations. Material achievements in industry and technology have been phenomenal. But at what price? It's only quite recently that we've started questioning this hundred-and-thirty-year commitment. For the first time, we're removing the fetters that have hindered the growth of individuality. The campaign for the America's Cup is a product of change in Japanese society. It's a radical departure. For Nippon Challenge, the object isn't to create a new type of being. The object is to win a race. But to win it we need people who can transcend the 'group mentality' and share an intense individual commitment to winning."

What emerged from these various considerations must surely stand as the most unorthodox recruitment drive in America's Cup history. Most of those now crewing in San Diego came to the syndicate through classified advertisements in newspapers and magazines. One is a soccer player named Ken Hara, and another is a young executive named Hitoshi Matsubara, known to all as Jin, who used to work at a Tokyo printing plant. For a time, Nippon's sail trimmers included a pig farmer. Also in the crew are a former computer salesman and a slew of other young *sararimen*, as white-collar workers are called. Some of the sailors are straight from the textbook written by Kaoru Ogimi—but only some. Others are in the crew because they weighed a hundred and sixty-five pounds and stood five feet ten—the minimum measurements listed in the ads.

I took to Ken Hara, Jin, and a few others as soon as we met; they are young people who seem refreshingly vital and animated when compared with many of the Japanese I've encountered in typical social and professional circumstances. I once asked Hara-*san* what he had said when Nippon Challenge's managers asked him why a soccer player doing temporary work as a bartender, tutor, and athletic-club attendant wanted to sail. He told me that his reply had been "I like winning. You put yourself into it. You can see the results of what you've done."

Tatsu Yamasaki had an interesting reaction when he received the first batch of recruits in his private office at S & B. It is an expansive room, with a sea-green carpet, a large desk at one end, and relics of the *kaicho's* racing life all around it: plaques and bowls, photographs, a wooden model of one of his yachts. The nine recruits (seven of whom have gone the distance) ranged in age from twenty-two to thirty-three, and they made up a fair sampling of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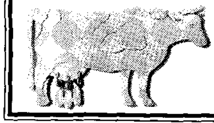
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the nation's youth. Yamasaki eventually warmed to them, he told me, but he had initially been mystified as he smiled out from behind his desk. "Who are these people? I wondered," he recalled. "Can we hire people like this—long hair, dirty clothes, shaky backgrounds? This is what we've come up with?"

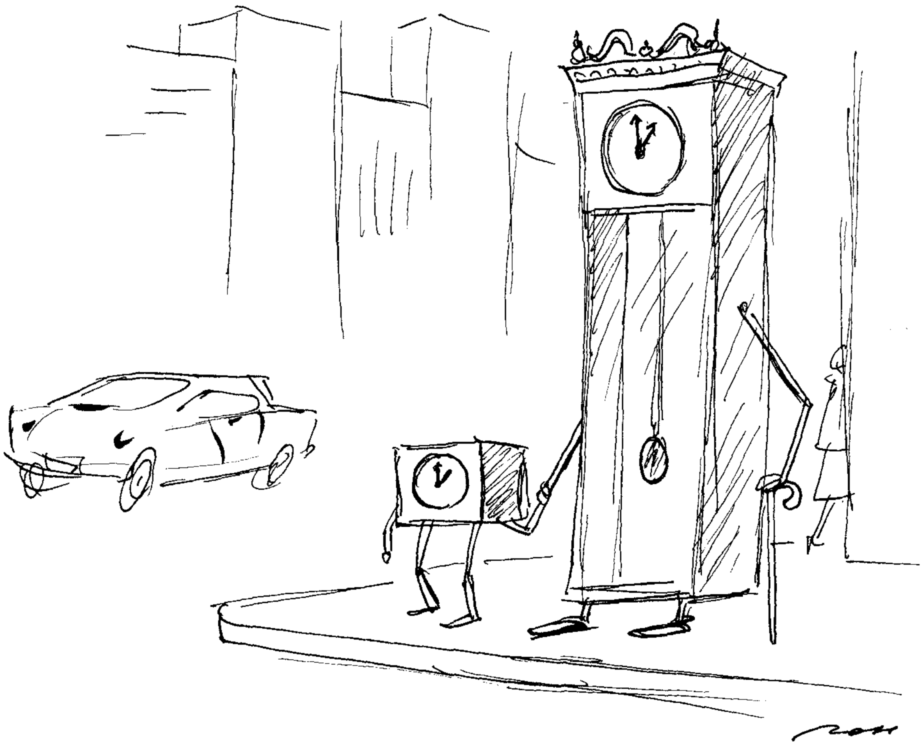
THE Japanese take exceptional care in their borrowing from abroad. They try to absorb the best from each nation they come to know, and leave the rest, and they usually display an uncanny ability to discriminate. Nippon Challenge was no exception to this tradition. The first *gaijin* sailing coaches arrived, in March, 1987, through an American named Gary Jobson, a noted yachtsman with considerable America's Cup experience. Jobson's team didn't last, however—it was judged too blunt and aggressive in its methods—and that autumn New Zealanders, who probably know more about sailing, and take the sport more seriously, than anyone else in the world, began to replace the Americans.

Before Nippon Challenge's sailors moved to San Diego, they trained for three years at the edge of Gamagori, a run-down port not far from the city of Nagoya, south of Tokyo. The Kiwi in charge of the camp for much of that time was Roy Dickson. Roy-*san*, as he was called as soon as he set foot in Gamagori, is now in his early sixties. He has close-cropped gray hair, eyes of an exceptional blue, and a compact frame that seems barely to contain a boundless, frenetic energy. He has raced internationally for New Zealand since 1951. Over time, a number of younger sailors from Auckland joined Dickson in Japan, and several of them now sail as Nippon's afterguard—its navigator, tactician, and head sail trimmer. Chris Dickson, the second of his four sons, is the skipper. Roy-*san*, however, is once again only Roy. He left Nippon Challenge almost a year ago, and says he is still recovering from the whole experience.

Dickson gave the Japanese campaign shape and direction where there had been none. Under the Americans, the sailors had learned by rote and by imitation; before Dickson arrived, they couldn't even moor their craft unless they were in the same place every day. Roy-*san* exposed them to an international standard for the first time in their brief lives on the water; he pushed them almost bodily—and without much mercy, it must be said—into the world in which they would compete. He taught them how to sail Twelve-Metre yachts, and he taught them that sailing is more than mere technique: it is *shisei*, or attitude—"a way of life," as one of the winch grinders once described it. "Drill hard, and the race itself will be nothing more than a formality" was one of Dickson's many aphorisms. Dickson was hugely esteemed within the syndicate, but, without really meaning to, the Japanese defeated him. Dickson was hired to teach them all that they didn't know about competing, but he gradually realized that he was among people to whom such delicate matters as *uchi* and *soto* would always count for more than anything else. The more Dickson learned about *gambatte*, the more he recognized it as essentially the way of the uninspired. He found responsibility—a key to his method—to be so diffuse that he could never properly assign it. These situations persist even now. Dickson engaged in a long struggle to persuade Tatsu Yamasaki to change the syndicate's official slogan from "Challenge the Cup!" to "Win the Cup!" Like most other *gaijin* who try to change the Japanese before the Japanese are ready to change, he won a war of words, and not much else.

Since Dickson left the syndicate, he and I have had many long conversations about his experiences in Japan. He has shown me that there are two ways to watch the Japanese sail: you can see them the way they see themselves—as having come an impressively long way in quite a short time—or you can compare them with sailors against whom they're competing, and conclude that they are nowhere near prepared. Dickson has always given a balanced account of things, but it is clear to me that he was overwhelmed in Gamagori—that he temporarily lost his grip. "I saw it as my task to tackle the problems of motivation, commitment, and responsibility," he said in one of our talks. "And as I looked at these problems I began to realize that I was looking at a different national philosophy, a different country's way of doing things."

Not long after the Japanese crew began training, a group of them was packed off to Luleå, a small port in the far north of Sweden, to compete in the



syndicate's first Twelve-Metre regatta. (The Japanese had bought two Twelves from New Zealand by then, but for the races in Sweden they leased a boat from an American syndicate.) Gary Jobson, who was serving as a consultant, organized the Japanese entry and skippered throughout the series. He could see the results of the arduous drilling the coaches had done, but Sweden did not go well. Language problems, accidents, and sloppy responses pushed the Japanese further and further down the ladder; they finished seventh of ten entries. Tatsu Yamasaki was in Luleå from the beginning. His mood was excellent during the pre-race practice days, when he went out sailing with Jobson and the crew. After the races began, however, he fell into a deep, private silence, which was familiar to those who knew him well. For more than a day, he spoke to no one. Only Taro Kimura, who arrived midway through the event, was able to revive the *kaicho's* spirits. "Even if we only want to make a respectable showing for the America's Cup," Yamasaki pronounced as he emerged from his cocoon, "we'd better have one hell of a boat."

Gary Jobson remembers that moment as probably the most important turning point in the Nippon Challenge campaign, he told me recently. After Luleå, the Japanese would concern themselves less with people than with money and things. "After that day in Sweden," Jobson said, "technology was everything."

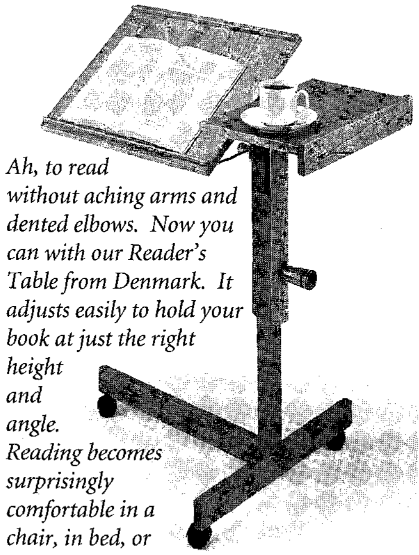
THE job of coördinating the design and building of the first two Nippons, known by their America's Cup designations as JPN-3 and JPN-6, was given to a scientist from Osaka named Kensaku Nomoto. Nomoto, a compact man, with a broad face and a wide, warm smile, is a recognized authority in the field of hydrodynamics. He has never worked in a Japanese corporation, but his students populate the executive offices, design divisions, and testing facilities of every shipbuilder in Japan. Nomoto is a *sensei*—a master—and a key figure in the postwar rise of the Japanese shipbuilding industry. And, like many of his generation, he has a deep sense of national pride when it comes to matching the West.

Designing a yacht requires both an artistic sensibility and a knowledge of the various sciences involved; the best naval architects, such as Bruce Farr, the noted New Zealand designer, combine both in the proper balance. Nomoto knows little about the artistic side of yacht design, but he has enormous faith in science. When he joined Nippon Challenge, in 1987, he understood that the technological expertise involved in making tankers and cargo vessels did not carry over into yachts, and that in the matter of sailboats the Japanese were far behind the curve. Soon after joining the syndicate, he said, "Our policy is to cover our lack of design and building experience by making full use of advanced hydrodynamics expertise and advanced facilities"; he has repeated the statement often in the years since.

Nomoto's task seemed an easy one when he and a large team of scientists and industry experts set out. The essence of the exercise was simply to improve on the two Twelve-Metre yachts the syndicate had acquired. In this, Nomoto had a perfect partner: the hull was to be built by the marine division of the Yamaha Motor Company. There is no purer example of a company that has lived by learning from others; in the century since Yamaha was founded, it has expanded from clarinets and pianos to motorcycles and sailboats—all by imitating imported products. Not long after Nomoto began work, however, the America's Cup organizers replaced Twelve-Metre yachts with lighter, longer, swifter craft of a new type, called the International America's Cup Class. The change should have given the Japanese a big advantage: experienced sailing nations suddenly had no edge on newcomers like Japan. Instead, it landed Nomoto with the one problem he had probably wanted to avoid more than any other: because no one had ever built an I.A.C.C. yacht, there was nothing from which he could learn.

No one has ever been able to tell me what it cost to design the first Nippons, but the outlays were extravagant by any measure. A laboratory will normally tank test three to five models before building a cargo vessel; the shipbuilding subsidiary of Mitsui & Company tested twenty-two Nippon models under the *sensei's* careful eye. At market value, those tests were worth some six million dollars. The time logged on supercomputers, at the then prevailing commercial rate of three hundred yen a second, could be valued at a million two hundred thousand dollars. Nomoto's confidence in his testing tanks, wind tunnels, and computers was reflected in a chart called a polar diagram. A polar, which is normally produced while a yacht is still in development, is a computer-generated graph that shows the speed the craft should attain under various conditions and the heading it should

Lay Down Your Arms



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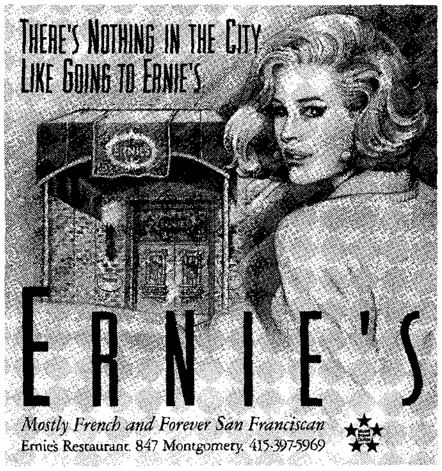

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assume in order to reach that speed. The Nippons' polar was extraordinary. It indicated that at certain angles the Japanese sloops would sail almost as fast as the wind.

The Nippons were built at a Yamaha factory in a small coastal town called Arai. Akira Kubota, who oversaw construction, is in his mid-forties and dresses every day in a light-blue technician's jacket with his name and the Yamaha insignia on the breast pocket. When I visited him at Arai in 1990, Kubota showed the zeal of a diligent student for his task, which he had recently completed. But he seemed to know little about other segments of the project: he was only peripherally involved in the design phase, and then, when JPN-3 and JPN-6 left for Gamagori, the undertaking was more or less out of his hands. I asked Kubota who had designed the Nippons.

"In the contract between Nippon Challenge and Yamaha, we agreed it's confidential who did what in the group," Kubota replied, somewhat stiffly.

"Why?"

"Because it's in the contract."

"Yes, but why is it in the contract?"

"We agreed to call it a team project, and everyone takes responsibility for each piece of work."

"Can we call this a Yamaha design?" I inquired.

"I'm not in a position to answer that."

Ken Nomoto was eventually more forthcoming. "I cannot tell you who designed the boat," he told me one afternoon in Tokyo. "Our system is different from the normal procedure. Normally, one chief designer is responsible—Bruce Farr, say. But we gathered a number of scientists and engineers, some boat people from Yamaha, and some independents, and formed a design team. I was a coördinator, not a designer. For example, there's the way we drew lines. In the normal way, Bruce Farr would draw the lines representing the hull. But we asked one of the Yamaha designers to draw the lines, under such-and-such conditions. I would say, 'Length, twenty-two metres.' Then I would ask for lines with another set of specs. All those lines went to the towing tank, and we chose the optimum combination. This choice was based on calculations by scientists, not designers. Out of that we got lines—not by a designer but by a group."

JPN-3 looked brilliant on its maiden outing. It is white with a bright-red rising sun on its sides, and it seemed, that first day, as light, stable, and highly powered as the authors of the I.A.C.C. formula had intended. But knowledgeable sailors were troubled as soon as the tarpaulin draping the hull was dropped. Gary Jobson was in Gamagori as a correspondent for ESPN, and he covered the launching. "It's a very unique design," he said into his microphone with what I thought was a slight gulp. Mike Spanhake, the head sail trimmer, wasted no time searching for neutral phrases. He told me that he thought the new yacht's lines were "aesthetically appalling" when he first saw them. "They're like something you'd expect to see in *Popular Mechanics*," he said. "At best, they're the creation of a highly insensitive computer."

Spanhake, a tall, thin New Zealander of forty-three, has sailed for almost as many years as he has walked. He is quiet and thorough, the kind of person it is hard to imagine losing his temper. He has an arts degree and brings a sculptor's sensibility to boats and sails. Sailors often speak of yachts in terms of their personalities. JPN-3, Spanhake thinks, is peculiar in that it doesn't have one. "Never in my days have I sailed a boat so devoid of sensitivity," he said when I asked him to recount his first excursion. "It's like sailing a corpse. You do things on a yacht—say, trim the sails a certain way—and it says back to you, 'I like this' or 'I don't like that.' This one gives no sensory return. It's like getting a dead-fish handshake. It's autistic—it communicates with no one."

Over a considerable period, Spanhake has given me a lengthy account of how the sailors in Gamagori discovered a few of the many secrets hidden within the Nippons' hulls. It is a story that manages to be both funny and almost incredible for the naïveté it reveals. There are, for instance, the two crafts' extremities, which are important design features. Because length enhances a boat's speed, designers try to incorporate a bow and a stern that overhang the waterline at mooring but are in the water when the craft is under sail. JPN-3 and JPN-6 have extensive fore and aft overhangs, but neither ever gets wet. They make the two sloops look, to the trained eye, something like a pair of bananas.

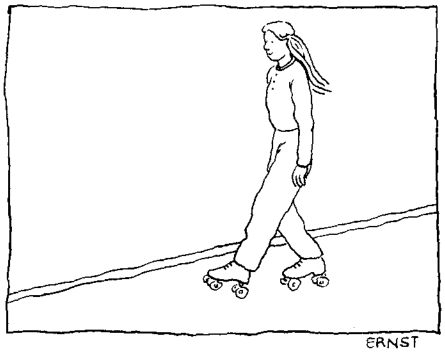
When Spanhake first noticed this inexplicable attribute, he climbed down the seawall at Gamagori to look across to the pier where the Twelves and the two I.A.C.C. boats were berthed. He crouched to sea level and peered straight across the four bows; then he walked along the wall and looked across the sterns. With mounting disbelief, he repeated the exercise many times, until he finally borrowed draftsmen's tools and took various measurements on one of the Twelves and one I.A.C.C. boat. All the tank tests and all the computer work, he discovered, had not shown Nomoto-*sensei* how to build a yacht. Blithely ignoring the fact that the Twelves were almost one and a half times heavier than the two Nippons, he had incorporated exact copies of the Twelve-Metre bow and stern into his design.

Much later, one of the Kiwis obtained a copy of the *sensei's* final line drawings—up to then, they had been treated as classified documents—and unfurled them before a few other members of the crew. The response was immediate and unrestrained laughter; within a minute or so, the crew members were holding their sides. Someone said, "They forgot the Plimsoll line"—the depth mark painted on the bow of a cargo vessel. As I soon learned, the joke was not far from the truth.

The archeology that followed revealed that at some point just before construction began Nomoto found that he had underdesigned the Nippons by almost two feet: they were too short to fit the I.A.C.C. rule. In effect, he scissored his drawings in two and added the needed length. Ideally, a yacht's lines should represent the designer's effort to balance the desire for speed and the need for stability, and should result in a series of constantly changing curves from bow to stern. But JPN-3 and JPN-6 started with their borrowed bows and went straight back along the sides, with no variation, for fifty-five per cent of their length. Then came the borrowed sterns. "What we were sailing was a supertanker," Mike Spanhake said.

IN the early months of 1991, Nippon Challenge moved its sailing camp to the shoreline district of San Diego called Mission Bay. The move brought to an end the campaign's long period of seclusion, when the Japanese could choose to measure themselves either according to their own standards or according to those of the international sailing scene. There was still almost a year until the America's Cup races were to begin, but the I.A.C.C. World Championships, the first regatta in the new class, were only a few months away, and those races would be an important preview of the Cup.

I watched the Worlds, along with Tatsu Yamasaki and a rotating roster of syndicate technicians and executives, aboard a cabin cruiser named Tariam II. Although I had seen the two Nippons often, the sight of nine of the new class of yachts, gathered as a fleet for the first time, was extraordinary. They were visible miles away, on the horizon, and at closer range they towered over the spectator craft that hovered near them. The Nippons looked fine in company, I thought. But the event was an immediate disaster for the Japanese. Before the first race was over, JPN-6 had blown a sail, lost its mastman overboard, and broken its mast, a fragile piece of high-tech engineering worth roughly four hundred thousand dollars. JPN-6 was refitted, with an older and heavier mast, but it raced badly for the rest of the series. It pitched too much, accelerated slowly out of turns, and was discovered to have been made for the wrong weather. The final race of the event, however, could have been a reprieve for Nomoto's design. The conditions that day were exactly right for the Nippon design: shallow swells and heavy winds, quite unusual in San Diego. But the Japanese lost another sail and didn't cross the finish line until the spectator fleet had begun to head in. The *kaicho* was especially furious. "Five minutes and ten seconds!" he exclaimed, from his perch aboard Tariam II, not a trace of the old *asobi* in his voice. "Look at the weather—winds eleven knots, the swells are down. These were our conditions. But at the first tack the others were already ahead of us."



From that moment on, Tatsu Yamasaki began to sound remarkably like Roy Dickson. Dickson had long argued for a third boat, and the *kaicho* told me even before he left San Diego that there would be one. There would be extensive testing on the water to arrive at its design, and direct input from the sailors. Nomoto-*sensei* would assume duties somewhere other than on the design team. Operations on both sides of the Pacific would be streamlined. In reaching these conclusions, Yamasaki seemed to have found a vein of determination within himself. He revelled in it. "I'll change designers, change the organization here, the technical team, the management method—change everything," he declared over dinner on the evening before his flight back to Tokyo. "It's going to be a long, hot summer."

For several months after that night, I heard only brief reports of Yamasaki's doings. Once back in Japan, he fired Kensaku Nomoto, following a full meeting of the syndicate's nine-member board at which Taro Kimura subjected the *sensei* to a particularly vicious attack. Five sailors and eight members of the shore crew were also relieved of duty—a delicate business in Japan. Then a budget for the third boat was announced: altogether, it would cost a little more than five million dollars, and more funds would be made available if necessary. For the first time, it was possible to calculate Nippon Challenge's bottom line. Japan would spend roughly seventy-five million dollars on its first America's Cup entry—a figure that put it second only to Italy, which has invested, by some estimates, a hundred million dollars.

The choice of a new designer marked another departure. Ichiro Yokoyama, a diffident man of forty-six, had been part of the *sensei's* technical team but hadn't been allowed much say. Yokoyama was something of an outsider: he had spent ten years in the marine division of Yamaha and then had quit to go out on his own. As a naval architect, he had as imaginative a mind as Japan could offer—something that deeply impressed the *kaicho* during the Worlds. "When we looked at the races together, what he had to say was

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fresh and original," Yamasaki remarked to me in explaining Yokoyama's appointment. "I didn't want science from Yokoyama. After four years and—what? a billion and a half yen?—spent on tests, we had enough science behind us. I expected Yokoyama to use our assets effectively, but I wanted him to add the creative dimension, the art."

Tatsu Yamasaki has gone as far as he could during the months since the Worlds. But it has often seemed to me that he has added decisiveness and a desire to win to his management of the campaign as if these things were new pieces of hardware he had spotted on a competitor's boat. In any case, as the races approached, Nippon Challenge had reached limits that were not entirely the *kaicho*'s. Ichiro Yokoyama's greatest success before joining Nippon Challenge was a boat called Matenrow, an impressive one-tonner that won an important regatta in 1990. The victory sealed Yokoyama's reputation at home, but Yokoyama is essentially a copyist. Any knowledgeable sailor who sees Matenrow recognizes it immediately as a clever knockoff of a Bruce Farr design. It remains to be seen how much progress the new Nippon embodies.

And what of the crew? A very few Japanese sailors, like Ken Hara, have understood from the beginning what competing and winning require. But, in my observation, hardly any of the others seem to have learned that. One of the New Zealanders said not long ago, "For most of these guys, Nippon Challenge is like two years in the mailroom." Last autumn, I sailed with the Japanese in a day of practice races with the French, whose camp is a short distance along the shore from the Nippon Challenge camp. Once again, the winds were fresh and the swells weren't very high—ideal conditions for the Japanese boat. Makoto Namba, the self-effacing sailor who had been one of the *kaicho*'s original Seven Samurai, had JPN-6's wheel. As a helmsman, Namba displayed a seriousness and an air of command that I hadn't seen in him before. But over three races Nippon beat the French on only two legs. The crew work became sloppier as the day wore on, and Namba did nothing about it. At one mark in the last race, the foredeck crew had trouble handling the spinnaker pole and fell immediately into Keystone Kops confusion. On the next leg, the bowman lost the spinnaker halyard; it floated gracefully in the wind until Namba steered around the next buoy and it drifted within reach. No one said a word. "They're fine as long as the routine holds, as long as there's no pressure. Let something unexpected happen and they just fall apart," Jaime Marina, an Australian in JPN-6's stern, commented with some disgust. Marina, a maintenance manager, who rarely left his shoreside duties to sail, was the only *gaijin* in the crew that day and was in the stern working the backstays.

ON November 23, 1991—a Saturday—about a hundred people inched their way through a traffic gridlock to enter the sprawling port of Nagoya. Most of Nippon Challenge's top executives had made the journey from Tokyo. Tatsu Yamasaki was there, and so were Taro Kimura, Kaoru Ogimi, and a sizable contingent from Yamaha. Though each probably saw the occasion differently, it was a momentous one for them all. As the executives stood in a group to one side, stevedores strapped green slings under a sleek white yacht, which was then hoisted aboard a cargo vessel named Hira II. JPN-26, the third Nippon, was on its way to San Diego.

"*Honto sugoi!*" Yamasaki exclaimed. "Really amazing!" He repeated the phrase frequently over the next hour or so. "She's so beautiful," he added. "We learned a lot from the first two boats. I have a good feeling about this one."

Kimura was less ebullient. "It should be a good boat, but I can't tell," he remarked. "At least, now I can tell Chris Dickson, 'You've got what you wanted. Now it's up to you.' "

Ogimi stood off at some distance. "The difference between this and the first two boats is radical," he said. "The thing that strikes you immediately is the difference in bow and stern shapes. In the first ones, there was a very broad flare at midships, but this one has much less flare. The maximum beam appears to be farther aft than on the first two." It was Ogimi's first sight of the craft, and his commentary ran on, non-stop, for several minutes.

Amid the excitement surrounding the third boat's completion, odd things began happening at Mission Bay. Late in the autumn, a few of the Yamaha people launched an information hunt around the sailing camp which lent a sordid new meaning to the notion of learning from abroad. Well before the first race, the files of all the *gaijin* in the camp were pilfered, and in some cases file cabinets were stripped bare. A Kiwi sailor might walk into his office to find a Yamaha technician sitting at his computer or searching his desk drawers. Yamaha had already written off its first America's Cup campaign to experience and was busy planning the next campaign, one of the technicians finally explained. It was to be run very differently. There would be no *gaijin*, for one thing. The campaign would concentrate even more heavily on research and technology, and it would prepare at home as long as it could. There would be no sailing camp abroad until the last minute; then a small crew would show up with a single boat. After so much effort, so little had changed.

When I last saw Kaoru Ogimi, in a hotel coffee shop overlooking Mission Bay, no finish lines had yet been crossed. It was January, and the first races of the twenty-eighth America's Cup were still a few days away, but Ogimi nevertheless displayed a certain stoic disappointment. He has always viewed the campaign as part of a greater struggle that the Japanese are engaged in—not with trading partners or security allies so much as with themselves. To him, the event itself is an afterthought. Ogimi is a resolute man, ambitious for his country, but he does not represent Japan to me as accurately as Tatsu Yamasaki, who has glimpsed a world larger than his own but has never brought himself to enter it. "You can tell Tatsu the score, and I have many times, and you think you've got through," Ogimi said of the *kaicho*. "But he always slides back to the comfort level. Is he a great competitor? Yes and no. He likes to compete, but within the Japanese limit."

This image of the *kaicho* hasn't changed since the races began, in late January, even though the Japanese have done extraordinarily well. By the end of three preliminary rounds, they had a record of eighteen wins and three losses, and were the leaders going into the semifinals, which began on March 29th. (The other semifinalists were New Zealand, France, and Italy.) The Japanese lost their first three races in the semis, however, which made it unlikely that they would reach the finals to determine which syndicate will face the Americans to race for the Cup itself. In any case, it's hard to know what or whom to credit for Japan's performance. Some people around Mission Bay talk about luck—never to be discounted when wind and water are involved—and the mistakes other syndicates are making. The Japanese crew is certainly sailing as well as or better than it ever has, and Chris Dickson is skippering with what many say is uncharacteristic composure. But Japan's victories seem to come down to JPN-26, which has proved to be among the two or three fastest boats in San Diego. And on this point comments from within the camp can be interpreted strictly on *gaijin-nihonjin* lines. Throughout the races, the Kiwis in the afterguard have ordered a succession of changes to the boat's keel and rudder, and these have clearly made a difference. The Yamaha people say that their computer work is fine-tuning the Kiwis' seat-of-the-pants knowledge. Like the *sensei's* design procedures, the truth of that assertion will probably never be known.

As for Tatsumitsu Yamasaki, he seems to have reëntered his private cocoon. Security is tight among all the syndicates now, and even the few visitors once allowed within the sailing camps are no longer welcome. By all accounts, though, the *kaicho* appears to have been less prepared for success than for the middle-of-the-road showing that has always been his goal. "You see him around the docks, and it's obvious he's utterly bewildered by it all," Mike Spanhake told me after Nippon Challenge secured its place in the semifinals. "Here's a guy who has lived on fantasies all these years, and now they're coming true. It's all a wee bit much, I think. It's like he's saying, 'Hey, I preferred the dream.' "

—Patrick Smith

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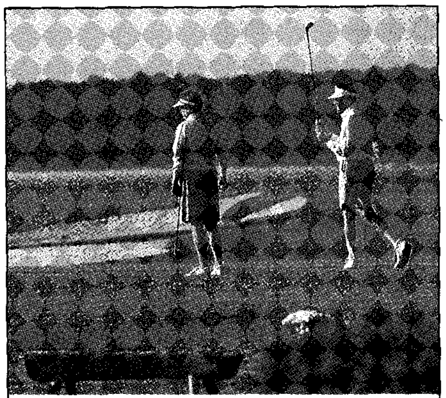

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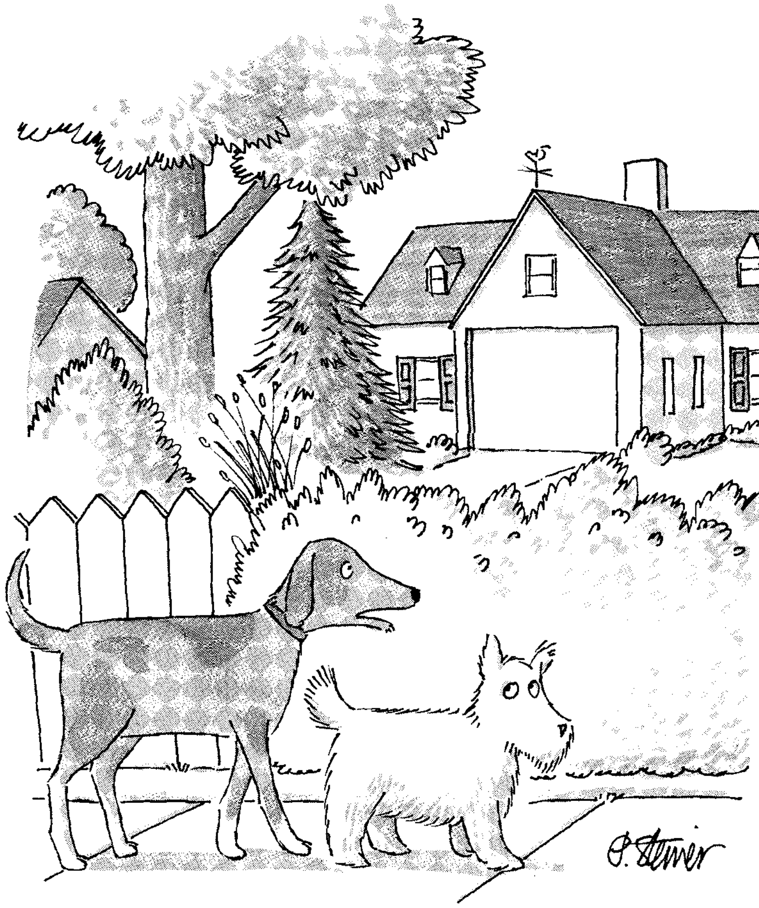
BOOKS

Backwater

LONG after the civil-rights movement swept through Montgomery, Birmingham, and Little Rock, every judge, juror, store owner, librarian, firefighter, mailman, and cash-register operator in McIntosh County, Georgia, was white, the schools were so unabashedly segregated that some children rode to an all-black school on a bus that took them past an all-white one, and the black citizens of the county—a majority of the population—had yet to mount an organized protest against any of this. Most of them, in fact, voted regularly for an old-fashioned Southern sheriff and political overlord, Tom Poppell, who had once been heard to remark that the "only way you can control the Negroes is to keep them hungry" but was nonetheless widely beloved by blacks as well as whites for his practice of commandeering the scenes of truck accidents along the county's main highway, U.S. 17, and making the cargoes available for public plunder.

"Praying for Sheetrock," by Melissa Fay Greene (Addison-Wesley; $21.95), is an account of the belated passing of this order. The book begins in June of 1971, at a site where two semitrailers have collided in the night, one spilling a portion of its load—brand-new shoes in tissue-lined boxes—on the highway. "With daylight Sheriff Poppell knew, and the firefighters knew, and the deputies knew, and the people in the cabins in the surrounding woods knew—and if the truck drivers had realized their trucks had crashed in McIntosh County, Georgia (431 miles of swamp, marsh, and forest: population 7,000) *they* would have known—that it was nearing time for a little redistribution of wealth," Greene writes. "It was one of the things for which Tom Poppell was famous across the South. It was one of the things that invariably put the sheriff in an excellent mood."



"I had to decide—am I living for the American Kennel Club, or am I living for me?"

Greene introduces us to Sheriff Poppell toward the end of his political career, and to Thurnell Alston at the beginning of his. Alston is one of the beneficiaries of the shoe heist—a young black man who, in a crowd of mostly older blacks, stands out for his failure to nod respectfully or call "Good morning, Sheriff!" before leaning down to examine the goods. "All our lives, people always saying, 'Hey, the sheriff give this to me!' " Alston told Greene. "These people haven't been nowhere else. The sheriff just really had them hoodwinked."

As a teen-ager, Alston had accompanied a team of men on a turpentining mission in the woods of central Georgia. The workday began well before dawn and ended at nightfall, when the men would heat up some canned baked beans for dinner and catch a few cold hours of sleep on beds made of straw. Alston received five dollars for a month of labor; after he paid for transportation home and impulsively bought a present for a younger brother, he was left with twenty cents. Greene describes the grownup Alston as an awkward man, tall and thin, with a chain-smoker's scratchy voice and a stammer, his teachers having done a better job of drilling the flowery old coastal dialect Gullah out of him than of drilling Standard English in. But he has a sharp eye for injustice, and isn't shy about confronting it. "The man will stand up," people say of him. When a white police officer in Darien, the county seat, shoots a black man whose only apparent offense was some boisterous flirtation with a female acquaintance, the black population wakes up from a long political stupor, and turns to Alston to lead what becomes a campaign for meaningful black participation in the county's major commercial and public institutions.

What Greene has written is political history of a rare kind, about a jurisdiction so small and isolated as to be (one would have thought) almost beneath literary notice: a slice of coastal Georgia where as late as the mid-nineteen-seventies a high proportion of the black inhabitants lived without plumbing, telephones, electricity, or paved roads, and people of both races regarded the civil-rights revolution as "a fabulous tale about distant places." Greene—an Atlantan—writes from a conviction that cities have claimed more than their fair share of space on the stage of history, just as they have claimed more than their fair share of shoes. Small-town America has its revolutions, too, she tells us, and they are not to be understood as footnotes to a story that has its heart elsewhere.

In McIntosh County, as in the nation as a whole, the black churches served as revolutionary headquarters. For nearly two centuries, their mission had been to direct people's thoughts toward God and Heaven, but now they encouraged their parishioners to focus on earthly concerns. In the summer of 1975, three years after the shooting incident, another round of political activity was set off by the dismissal of the lone black member of the school board (who had been asking questions about the possible siphoning of public funds into a private all-white academy), and Thurnell Alston was often a guest preacher in tiny churches with long names, like Junior Church of Christ Holiness and Shorters Chapel African Methodist Episcopal, reciting a litany of statistics concerning discrimination at the phone company, the power company, and the welfare and Social Security offices, and in the major governing bodies of the county. Greene writes:

> These political prayer meetings went on night after night with larger and larger crowds, with rival choirs—green-robed, scarlet-robed, purple-robed—succeeding one another on the platform, the luxurious robes swirling and unfolding as the choir members climbed and descended. Beardless, soulful, round-eyed young men pried into heaven with falsetto voices until everyone in the packed house was near fainting with glory; and buxom, black-wigged, corsage-wearing ladies with lungs like the west wind (somebody's cook, somebody's maid—the white world never saw them like this) let loose and revived the people with cascades of shrieking melody until everyone was clapping, everyone was stamping, the church itself was vibrating and seemed about to ascend.

To the power of this familiar local institution—"this antebellum, African-American Christian community in isolation on the Georgia coast," as Greene describes it—was soon joined that of a new and alien institution, the Georgia Legal Services Program. The idea of government-supported legal services was one of the last offshoots of Great Society/War on Poverty thinking. The state politicians who originally funded the Georgia program expected it to provide free legal counsel to poor people in, say, insurance disputes with employers or rent disputes with landlords—a bold notion in itself. In Georgia and elsewhere, however, some legal-services lawyers were not satisfied to practice this sort of "Band-Aid law"; looming behind the grievances of individual clients they saw systemic injustices, and they responded with systemic lawsuits. To the horror of the politicians, the defendants in some of these actions were agencies of state and local government.

Between 1975 and 1977, the G.L.S.P. lawyers filed a series of suits intended to expose and undo the mechanisms that excluded blacks from the grand jury, the school board, and other key public institutions of McIntosh County. In the most important and complex of these suits, they succeeded in demonstrating that while blacks were free to, and did, vote in the county's elections, the process was manipulated to insure the victory of white candidates. At a federal judge's insistence, the county was split into districts, some with black majorities—a step that led to Thurnell Alston's election as a member of the County Commission. Alston, who attended commission meetings looking, Greene says, "as frilly as a signer of the Declaration of Independence," saw to it that the poor black sections of the county (poor and black being essentially synonymous there) got such things as a medical building, a mental-health clinic, a community center, access to municipal water, and bathrooms for the primitive cabins and sharecroppers' shacks in which many black people lived.

Like most of McIntosh County's inhabitants, Greene's narrative sticks close to home; within the county boundaries, however, very little escapes her notice. She tells us hardly any more about politics than about, for example, fish-processing, pulpwooding, and turpentining—livelihoods in which, two decades ago, black men and women toiled under conditions as close to slavery as to present-day notions of a minimally decent workplace. Miss

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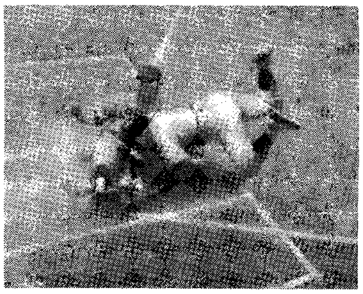

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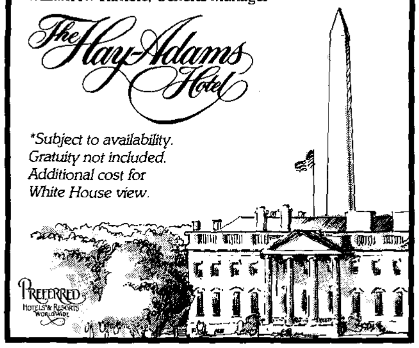
Fanny Palmer raised eleven children—"eleven head of children," she liked to say—while employed in a shrimp- and oyster-packing factory. She would send her older children (starting at age eight or ten) off to jobs of their own and take the littlest one of the moment with her. She recalled:

> I'm going to that factory rain or shine, rain or shine or lightning. I had two little children, and I carry one and put him in a little box. I do every one of my children just like that, in a box. . . . I was working in the shrimp, and standing in ice—standing in ice from three o'clock in the morning till five in the evening. I ain't had no good shoes on my foot, had them little slippers. When I get off, I don't seem to have a foot on my body. And every doctor I go to he say, Is it time for the change of life? Do I have hot flashes? I tell him I don't know nothing about no hot flash. My blood wasn't nothing but water. I couldn't eat; I had a straw through a bottle, and I sucked that straw for a year. July when it be hot I have to have a blanket over me; the cold was done gone through me. Anyhow, God helped me, because I should have been dead. Many young women come along like me be dead and gone, and I right here.

It is Fanny Palmer who, living on Social Security payments of a hundred and twenty-five dollars a month, prays for Sheetrock (not necessarily knowing just what it is), so that she and a full-grown mentally retarded son can move into an unfinished new house and out of a collapsing old one, where in winter the two of them sleep wearing sweaters, coats, hats, gloves, and shoes. Her prayers are answered when a neighbor stops by to tell her of a wreck on the highway and a supply of Sheetrock waiting for someone to tote it away. "Ain't that been a good God?" says Palmer. "*Ain't* that been a good God!"

A mainstay of the white economy, at the beginning of Greene's story, was the county's twenty-mile piece of federal highway—a precious resource right up there with lumber and seafood. U.S. 17 was an all but unavoidable thoroughfare for anyone heading down the coast to (or up the coast from) Florida, and, since not every vehicle could be depended on to have an accident or a breakdown, it behooved the citizenry to think of ways to induce people to interrupt their journeys voluntarily. This was accomplished with roadside displays of Confederate flags, beaded Indian belts, Mr. Peanut caps, miniature bags of cotton, and pirate ships made of seashells; with signs proclaiming "Peaches!," "Pecans!," and "Shimps!" (deliberately misspelled for local color); with hush puppies, hamburgers, fried pork rinds, and devilled crabs; and with pornography, drugs, prostitution, and gambling. Travellers would lose hundreds, and even thousands, of dollars playing cards or dice with locals who to a Yankee's eye seemed both too obtuse and too poor to be engaged in successful chicanery. One of the most profitable enterprises was a wondrously unfathomable game of chance known as razzle-dazzle, which had been a force in the regional economy since the nineteen-forties. (Greene cites an authority on rural gambling habits named Matthew Gryczan, who in "Carnival Secrets," a book that spells out winning techniques for a host of other games, has only one piece of advice to offer about razzle-dazzle: "Never play this game. Advise others not to play.") That Sheriff Poppell and his men were on friendly terms with the operators of these illicit enterprises few people doubted. Yet, apart from the publisher of the local newspaper, few people seemed to care; the clip joints, like the Sheriff's giveaways, had a Robin Hood-like appeal, since they preyed on Yankee tourists. "The long northern cars drooped with wealth as they roared into the South," Greene writes. To let them roar through unimpeded was unthinkable.

IN a few lines of acknowledgments at the end of the book, Greene thanks her "former colleagues" at the G.L.S.P. This is the only clue she drops as to how she became acquainted with McIntosh County and its political strife, but her G.L.S.P. work (she doesn't say what it was) cannot have been more than the seed of her research. Greene worked on the book for fifteen years, bringing an oral historian's patience to interviews not only with the principal antagonists but with people who were neither movers and shakers in the drive for change nor stalwart figures in the resistance to it—who, in some cases, were not even paying terribly close attention. In this supporting polyphony, the voices include that of Danny Thorpe, a retired shrimp fisherman and church deacon, who refused to believe that there had been slaves among his ancestors. "Parents and grandparents born in Darien, all of them," he explained. "No they wasn't any slaves. They weren't slaves. I'm quite confident they come in since slaves." Before Alston's time, Thorpe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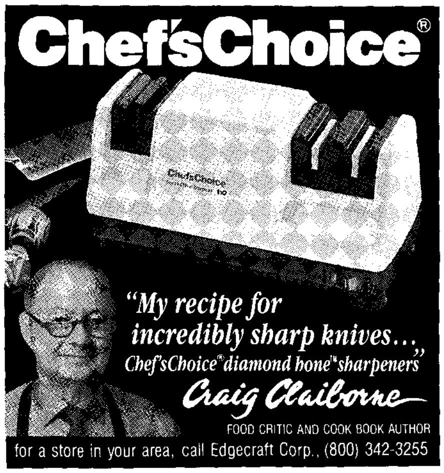
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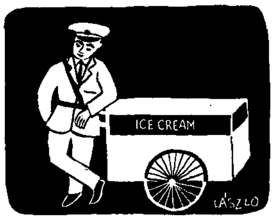
served as a token black member of the County Commission—he had been recruited to run for the office by Sheriff Poppell—and he was proud of his effectiveness in getting roads paved, land cleared, and septic tanks installed at county expense for well-connected citizens, invariably white. "The chairman was a good white gentleman, and he was real friendly with me," he recalled. "And things I didn't understand, he helped me out with."

We also hear from Dot Googe, the owner of the Keystone Motel and a minor public official, who—though she "counted many lovely black people along with the many lovely white people who were her dearest friends and acquaintances," according to Greene—remembered with horror the moment when a federal marshal walked into the county courthouse to hand out subpoenas in one of the G.L.S.P. lawsuits, and the later moment when imported lawyers "propped their feet up on the council table out there" and "ate their lunch there and left their chicken bones for *me* to clean up."

Perhaps the most startling voice is that of Lester Maddox—not the axe-handle-wielding restaurateur who for a time threatened to undermine Georgia's progressive image but the older, wiser Maddox who "surprised everyone," Greene says, "by serving as a decent and honest governor." Maddox enters the scene as a commentator on the regime of Sheriff Poppell, which he deplores. "People would buy a five-pound bag of pecans, and maybe half of them was fresh and the rest of them junk," Maddox told Greene. "They'd have their cars drained out of oil or their tires punctured while setting at the pecan stand and here, fifty feet down the road, sits a gas station that'll sell you tires or rebuild your engine. . . . The first time I went down there I warned them people I'd rather put Sheriff Poppell in jail than you business people, but something's going to have to give. You're hurting the young people in this county, the good people, and the state. That quieted it down for quite a while, then it came back. I couldn't get it cleaned up."



It was the long arm of the interstate-highway program that finally began to put the clip joints out of business. With I-95, which completed its traversal of coastal Georgia in 1975, came the dependable homogeneity of Howard Johnson's and Stuckey's. A road built to bring the nation closer together had brought New York closer to Miami and Disney World while making it considerably less necessary for anyone to make an unpremeditated visit to McIntosh County. For the sin of envying and sometimes fleecing the people who had passed through in pre-interstate days, the merchants of the county, legal as well as illegal, were now sentenced to have no further contact with their victims, in perpetuity.

As remarkable as the amount of labor invested in this book is the author's refusal to flaunt it. The extent of her knowledge comes through not in a profusion of detail or a tendency to digress but in the authority of the voice. She never gives the feeling of someone working from notes; all of McIntosh County seems to be laid out before her as she writes. "By daylight, during work hours," Greene tells us, "black people traveled south on U.S. 17 into Darien: they swept sidewalks, mopped floors, mowed lawns, diapered babies, cooked home meals, cooked restaurant meals, cooked school cafeteria lunches, cleaned motel rooms, pumped gas, raised children, washed and ironed clothing, collected garbage, caught and processed seafood, cut pulpwood, taught black children, and prepared black dead for burial. At the end of the day in a soft migration like birds lifting off a lawn at dusk, they drove or walked home to their distant wooded lots." The Georgia salt marsh is "the primeval home of every shy and ticklish, tentacle-waving form of sea life and mud life," Greene writes, and "The wetland has been claimed in various epochs by prehistoric Indians, Spanish missionaries, Blackbeard the pirate, French and English explorers, Sir Francis Drake, slaveholders and slaves, Confederates and Yankees, the victorious General Sherman, freed slaves, and unreconstructed Rebels. Citizens at the edge of the dry land have addressed one another as Monsignor, Excellency, Governor, General, Mistress, Master, Nigger. Furies inspiring men to violence have occurred at the marsh's edge, while in its midst the frogs simply continued to blow their round bass notes." Of the

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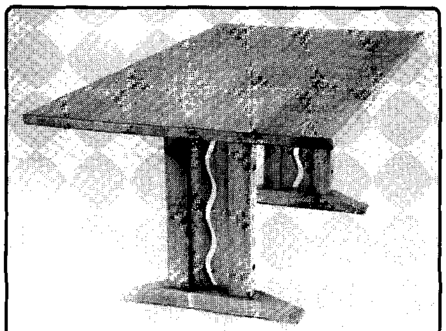

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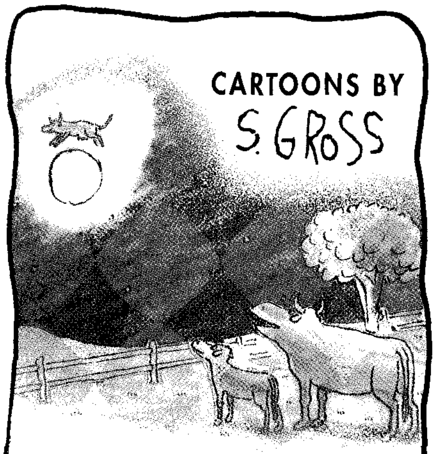

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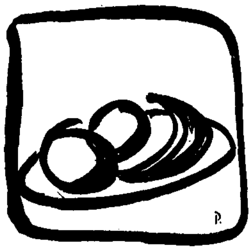
older blacks and their brand of Christianity she writes, "If a messenger of God were to appear on their porch one morning, there'd be no awkwardness of address, no groping for greetings of sufficient splendor, no fumbling for religious rituals last exercised in childhood, and no exaggerated prostration either: 'Gertie?! Angel of the Lord's here!' "

It cannot be said that Greene's descriptions of the land and the black men and women on it are often matched in richness by her writing about the white citizenry. With the exception of the Sheriff, the defenders of the old order are sketchy presences. Recounting a sit-in at the Darien City Hall, Greene contrasts the relaxation of the black protesters, who "had been rubbing up against each other all their lives," with the discomfort of their white adversaries, who "had sharp elbows and gooseflesh and did not brush together accidentally without leaping apart apologetically." Such observations contribute to a sense of imbalance, and a feeling that we are rushing downhill toward the triumphant time when the political have-nots will be haves, and vice versa. No sooner has this expectation been aroused, however, than it is put to rest, as Greene turns to the most painful chapter of her story, in which Thurnell Alston becomes a womanizer, a high roller, and an idler, and is brought down by a scandal involving drugs and money. Greene might have slid over his offenses, or have attributed them to his grief over a family tragedy—the death of a young son. But she has seen too much to be perfunctory. Politics, she shows us, has provided Alston with a handy excuse for bowing out of the work of child rearing and housekeeping. While he drives around the county to meetings, with no one to check on what is business and what is pleasure, his wife is waiting on tables twelve hours a day and more and coming home to babies and housework. At the comparatively rare times when she and her husband are home together, the image that Greene presents is of Alston lying in a hammock "as if it were a bateau in the warm air," having a whiskey, not rising even when his children beg him to umpire their softball game.



Greene points out that Alston was far from the only member of the new generation of black public officials in Georgia to be derailed by corruption charges. ("It was a mistake to put them all on a pedestal," one ex-G.L.S.P. lawyer observes.) Alston is caught in a sting operation put together by the Georgia Bureau of Investigation. Sheriff Poppell, too, is the target of a sting—in his case, initiated by the federal Drug Enforcement Administration. But, where Alston denies what can easily be proved and winds up in prison, the Sheriff has the considerable presence of mind—and élan—to exclaim, when a team of undercover agents descends on his apparent rendezvous with a drug-smuggling boat, "Thank God you boys got here in time." As his champions never fail to point out, he dies unindicted.

In the end, the black struggle in McIntosh County has much in common with the national story. The pursuit of political power is carried out with more grace and integrity than the wielding of it, and the leaders of the revolution are sometimes as callous toward women as whites have been toward blacks. The American economy is the greatest disappointment: there is room for a few people on school boards and county commissions, but a lot more people are hunting for good jobs. Greene's achievement recalls Jane Austen's description of her novels as fine brushwork on a "little bit (two Inches wide) of Ivory," and the authors of heavier volumes with bigger ambitions might well say of Greene something like what Walter Scott said of Austen: "We, therefore, bestow no mean compliment . . . when we say that, keeping close to common incidents, and to such characters as occupy the ordinary walks of life, she has produced sketches of such spirit and originality, that we never miss the excitation which depends upon a narrative of uncommon events, arising from the consideration of minds, manners, and sentiments, greatly above our own."

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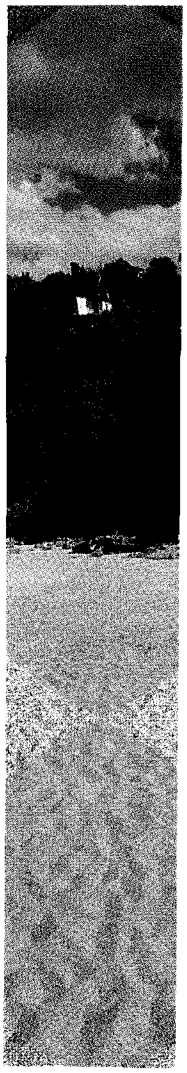

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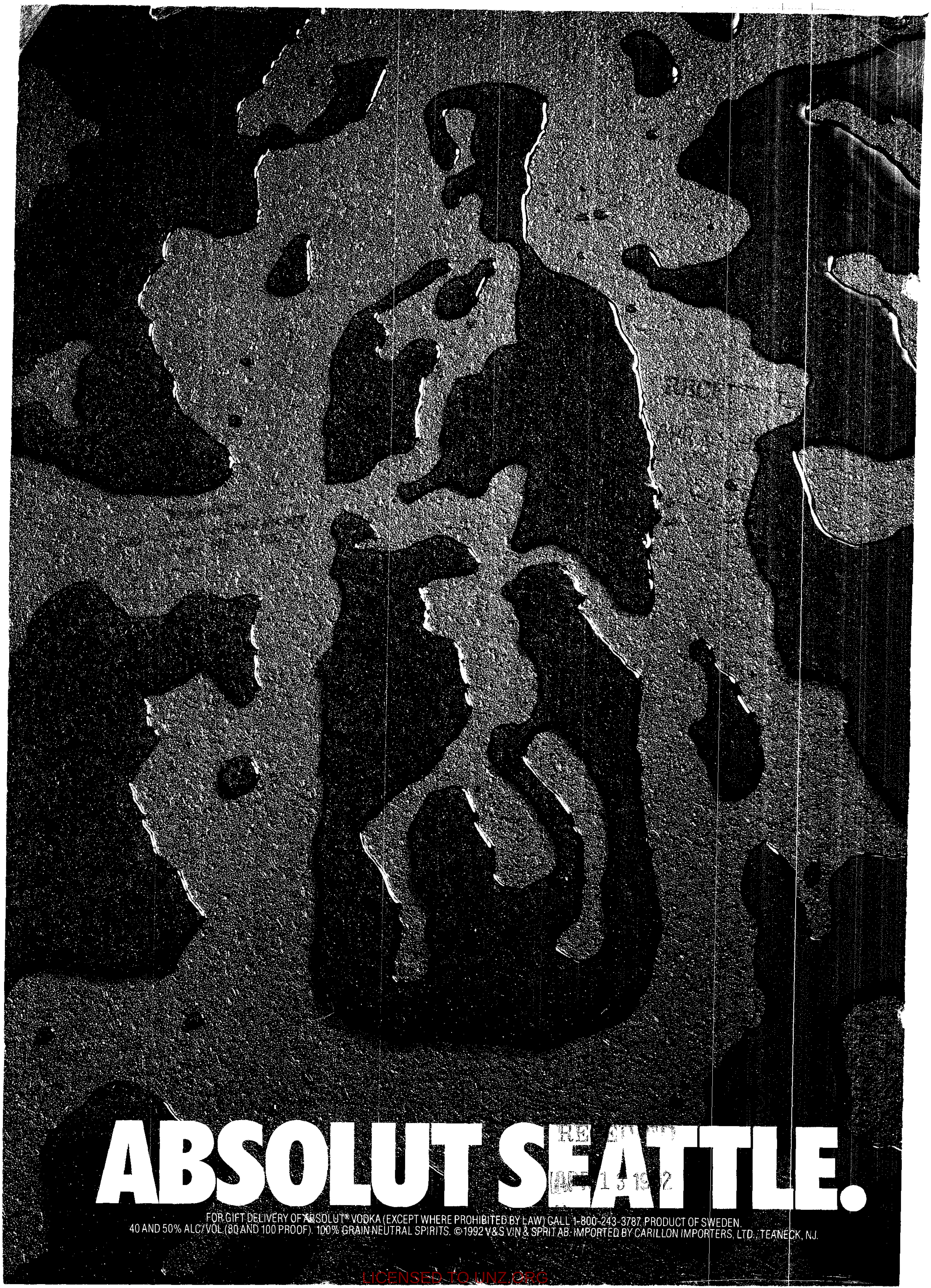

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